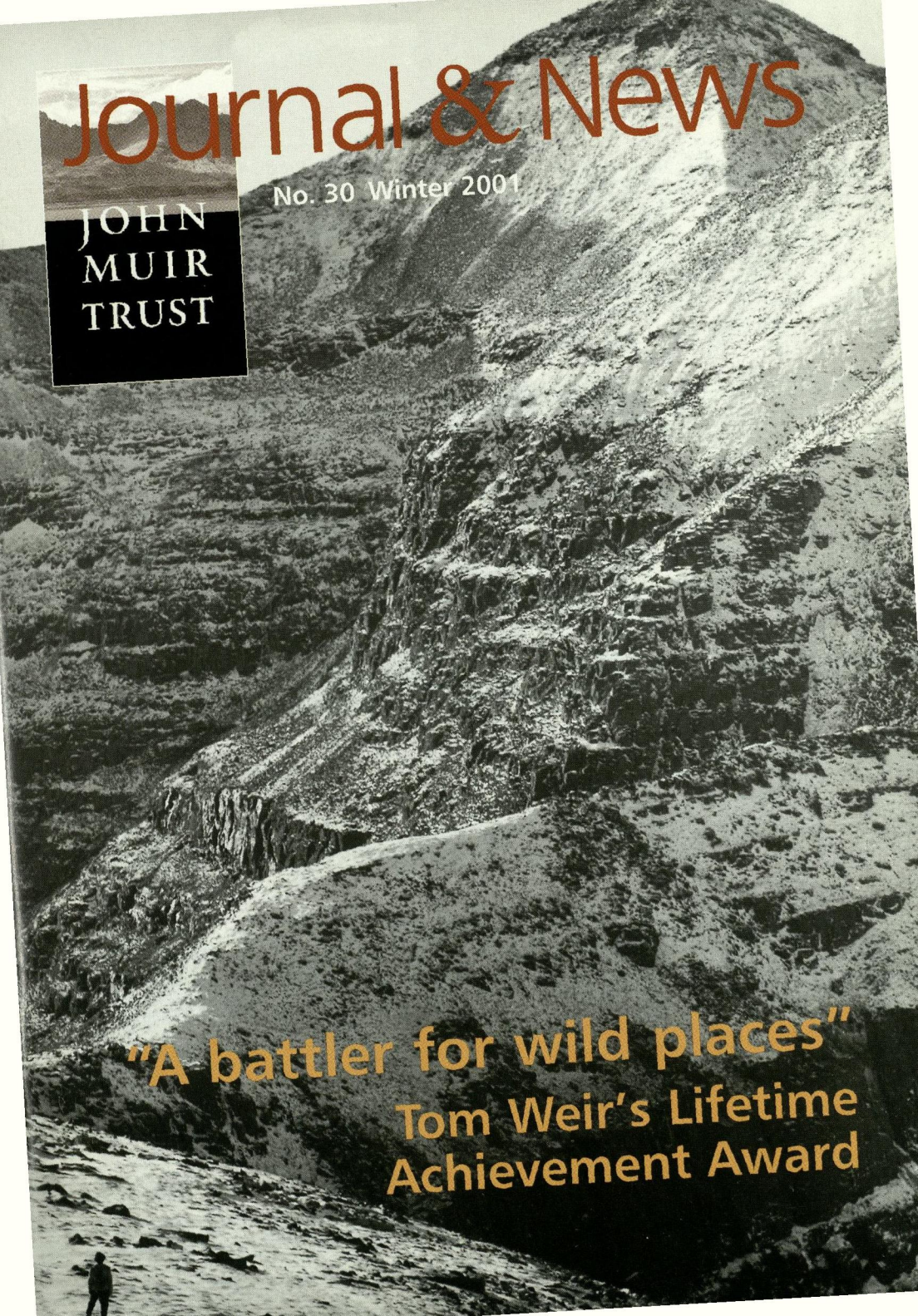
Journal & News

No. 30 Winter 2001

JOHN MUIR TRUST



"A battler for wild places"

Tom Weir's Lifetime Achievement Award

Glencoe. (photo: John MacPherson)

The John Muir Trust Journal & News
No. 30 Winter 2001

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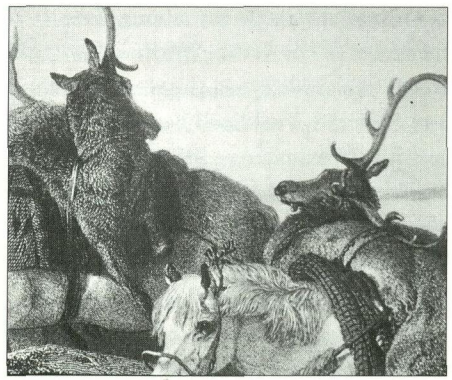

Deer extraction: see page 10.

Cover: Liathach, by Tom Weir, (46). Facing: Glencoe by John MacPherson, (57).

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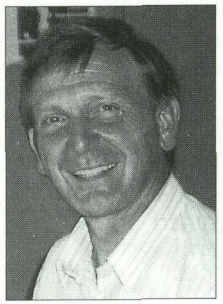
Director's Notes

A Memorable Occasion



The Trust's first ever John Muir Award for Lifetime Achievement was presented to the mountaineer, writer and broadcaster Tom Weir at a packed and emotional ceremony in Glasgow.

Tom, who was for many years a lone voice campaigning to safeguard and cherish wild places in Scotland, was given a standing ovation as he received the award from Adam Watson, former JMT Trustee and now our Honorary Adviser.

Among Tom's campaigns highlighted on the evening was his almost single-handed battle in the early 1960s to stop a hydro-electric development in upper Glen Nevis which would have fundamentally changed the character of the glen. We all owe Tom a huge debt of gratitude.

Support Flows in for Ben Nevis

Support for the Trust's Ben Nevis Appeal is continuing apace. The appeal has raised over £440,000 and is well on its way to the magic £450,000 mark which covers the purchase price. We are continuing the appeal for a full year because purchase is only stage one – stage two, future management of this wonderful area, is just as important.

Our members, yet again, have responded magnificently to the appeal and we have also had tremendous support from charitable trusts. Once we have raised the purchase price by our own efforts we shall look to public bodies to support future management costs.

We are working closely with the other members of the Nevis Working Party. It is not realistic for us to work on our own. A good example is the main Ben path. We are responsible for all of the path above 2500 ft – but what happens to the path on ground below that is of equal concern to us.

I am pleased to report that there is considerable agreement among the members of the Nevis Working Party on issues such as keeping the mountains and hinterland wild and beautiful, sensitively managing visitor access and ensuring that roadside facilities in the glen are appropriate to their setting. There is enormous goodwill among the partners.

Great News at Dunbar

There was great news for the John Muir Birthplace Trust from the Heritage Lottery Fund who have awarded £293,000 for the creation of an interpretive centre in John Muir's birthplace at 128 High Street, Dunbar.

I am pleased to report that JMT Trustee Denis Mollison is continuing as a Trustee of the Birthplace Trust and has been joined by the Trust solicitor Adam Gillingham as our other voluntary Trustee on the Birthplace Trust board. I have stepped down as a Trustee to enable me to fulfil other tasks but I shall certainly remain with the Birthplace Trust in spirit and will continue to give any support I can.

Key Issues at Strathaird

A group has been looking at key issues involved in the management of the Trust's estate at Strathaird on the Isle of Skye.

When the Trust took over the estate in 1994 it was decided to maintain existing operations including the farm, and to carry out a full review in five years or so. With the completion of the Management Plan, and with changes in the economic climate affecting agriculture, it was felt that a group should be set up to explore key issues at Strathaird.

The Trust's Skye-based managers, Ian MacKinnon, the estate manager; Andrew Campbell, woodland manger; and Keith Miller, conservation manager served on the group along with Trustees Angus McHattie and Roni Senior, former director and Trustee Terry Isles and myself.

The group reported to Trustees in October and there is further ongoing discussion which includes the local management committee for the crofted areas of Strathaird estate.

Skye remains very much our flagship project and Strathaird is a major part of this. I shall report further on this as matters progress. It is right that the Trust carries out a "root and branch" assessment of key parts of its operations from time to time.

Onward for the Award

The John Muir Award is taking a major step forward with the appointment of two new award managers – covering North Scotland and South Scotland.

This welcome development of the award scheme has been made possible because of funding of £171 000 over three years agreed by the Heritage

All Change at Schiehallion

A major decision relating to the future of the main path up Schiehallion was taken at a well-attended public meeting held at Coshieville in the summer.

The meeting attended by members of the Schiehallion committee, the Trust and others, agreed unanimously that the main path should follow the route of an old path right up the east ridge of the mountain and that the existing path from the car park to where it joins the east ridge high on the mountain should be completely reinstated. (More on page 26).

Lottery Fund. Our thanks are due to HLF for their support and congratulations must go to Award Manager Dave Picken and Development Manager Alison McGachy who worked together closely in preparing and presenting this application.

We also have our fingers crossed over an application to HLF for funding support for developing the John Muir Award in Wales including the appointment of an award manager based there. Trustee Rob Collister and member Del Davies have been working hard with Dave in successfully establishing the award in Wales.

It must be very gratifying to member Graham White, manager Dave Picken, former director and Trustee Terry Isles and Trustee Carole Ross who had the foresight five years ago to set up the award, to now see it reaching out to so many people.

Goodbye to Helen

Since 1998, the Journal has been designed and produced by Helen Meek, from her home near Dundonnell. Helen is now leaving us, but we will still enjoy her clear and elegant page design, and look forward to seeing her talents on show elsewhere. We are very grateful to Helen for what is a lasting contribution to our publications, and wish her every success.

Strategic Priorities

Trustees have been considering in great detail the strategic priorities for the Trust over the next five and more years. A "retreat weekend" was held at Newtonmore with discussions and workshops ably led by our chairman Andrew Thin and with enthusiastic and valuable input from Trustees and staff.

Trustees are considering five major priority areas for our operations – policy and partnerships, land and property management, education and winning hearts and minds, development of the Trust's human and financial resources, and prudent management of our finances and administration.

The growing role of the Trust in espousing the cause of wild land and influencing others whose decisions and actions have an impact on wild places forms a key aspect of all five areas.

A restructuring of staff responsibilities will facilitate this. The main change is to have five senior managers, who are Alison McGachy (development), Gavin Stewart (finance and administration), Dave Picken (education and the John Muir Award), Andrew Campbell (land and property) and Will Boyd-Wallis (policy and partnerships).

The five managers and myself will form a senior management team working to achieve integration of the Trust's work. The importance though of voluntary input to the Trust remains just as great as before.

Trees and Goats

There has been controversy in South Scotland over the removal of goats from the Carrifran Valley where the wildwood group of Borders Forest Trust is establishing a new native woodland.

In order to give the trees a chance to grow, grazing pressure whether by sheep, deer or goats has to be removed at least for the early years.

However, some local people have genuine concerns about the future and welfare of the goats.

It is a matter of judgement whether in one valley grazing animals should be removed for the time being to allow a wildwood to flourish, especially bearing in mind the almost total lack of native woodland cover in South Scotland. I do hope that goodwill can prevail with an amicable outcome. The wildwood project is an honest and courageous attempt to create a native woodland where natural processes will in years to come take over. At the same time it is vital that local views are taken fully into account.

New Manager for Knoydart

Good progress is being made by the Knoydart Foundation in securing a firm base for its operations and in implementing its programme. A major step forward has been the appointment of Angela Williams as development manager. Angela, who takes up her appointment in February, is married to a consultant marine biologist and has a 10-month-old baby. The family will live in Knoydart. She was operations director of the Groundwork Voluntary Sector Resource Centre in Burnley.

The foundation has been able to make the appointment thanks to a three-year funding package of £90 000 agreed by the National Charities Lottery Board. Angela has a key role to play in the future of Knoydart and we wish her every success.

The foundation has decided to sell or lease Inverie House, and Park House (near Airor) and they have been placed on the market at offers over £250 000 and £45 000 respectively. The sales will secure funding for priorities including the refurbishment of the hydro-electric scheme, upgrading of estate houses, and improvements to the hostel complex.

Revisions to the original pier replacement proposals could see a new pier alongside the new slipway for accommodating the 20 or so local boats which use the current pier, with a more limited window of access for the Cal-Mac Small Isles car ferry Loch Nevis.

Congratulations

To Becks Denny and Will Boyd-Wallis on the arrival of baby Hebe who weighed in – late – at over 9 lbs at Raigmore Hospital in Inverness. Baby, Mum – and Will – are all doing well ...

Across the Country

Our local members' groups continue to do a grand job for the Trust in different

parts of the country. I had the pleasure of attending on successive weekends in October the big south of England get-together at Stonar, Melksham, near Bath, and the north west of England meeting at Alston in the Pennines.

Both of these were great successes with abounding enthusiasm for the Trust and our work. Many helped with the events but I am sure they wouldn't mind me singling out Bob and Pom Langton of Bristol and Michael and Eunice Rusbridge of Prestbury for coordinating the events. I would also like to thank Sue Hopkinson, who has returned for another spell as Head of Stonar School, for making us so welcome – and to wish her and the school every success in the future.

And Finally ...

To return to the memorable night when Tom Weir received his John Muir Award for Lifetime Achievement. Two groups of young people – one from the area where John Muir explored as a boy near Dunbar and the other from the streets of Glasgow where they sell the *Big Issue*- received their John Muir awards from Tom and his wife Rhona.

This was followed by the presentation to Joanne Cowie of the 3000th John Muir Award, a remarkable milestone for the award programme. The delight of the young people in receiving their awards from Tom was a joy to see. ■

Nigel Hawkins

The Vision

Do not expect it in the green of May.
No cleanness in that growth that parturition
as pure as clean as death.

Nor in the blanc and flyblown August sun,
in hot banality upon a balding lawn,
in non-event of sweltering dessication.

Ignore October's blustering warm winds,
rain-rotted fruit let clog the orchard paths;
it brings no insight eaten.

But when the bloodline's thin as mercury
when ice flowers white on wood and stars the stream
then head up through the beeswarm of the snow
then climb the Hill of Vision.

Timothy Chappell

Cruel to be kind?

"A sustained and brutal operation." **Roger Wadsworth explains what deer management is like on the ground.**

I AM SURE that John Muir Trust Annual Report 2000 did not seek to gloss over some of the less pleasant aspects of land ownership, but the Report does not, in my opinion, draw sufficient attention to a necessary activity which any moderately sensitive human being will find repugnant.

The report refers to the reduction from 2000 to 1100 in five years in deer numbers on the Knoydart Peninsula, as recommended by Professor Rory Putman [JMT Journal 29], and mentions the need to reduce numbers to take pressure off the new enclosure at Li and Coire Dhorrcail. Reading the report in your armchair, without the benefit of experience, I doubt that many members of the JMT can appreciate the events which will follow from these proposals.

I should immediately nail my colors to my mast, or perhaps in my case, to my rifle. I am a member of the Trust, I have been a Scottish landowner, and I have shot mammals across four continents. One of the guiding principles of my life, both in business and in private activities, has been that you should not ask someone to do a job which you are not prepared to do yourself. When however a specialist skill is involved, then it is quite acceptable to delegate to persons with skills not available to the general public. I would not attempt to rewire the generator at the hydro plant on Knoydart. I would however be happy to assist the technician who had to turn out in a filthy night to do so, and I would like to feel that I could appreciate the particular difficulties and skills required to complete the job.

Thus, I believe most members of the Trust would regard the process of deer "control" as something which should be delegated, but they would also accept that they should know what is being done on their behalf.

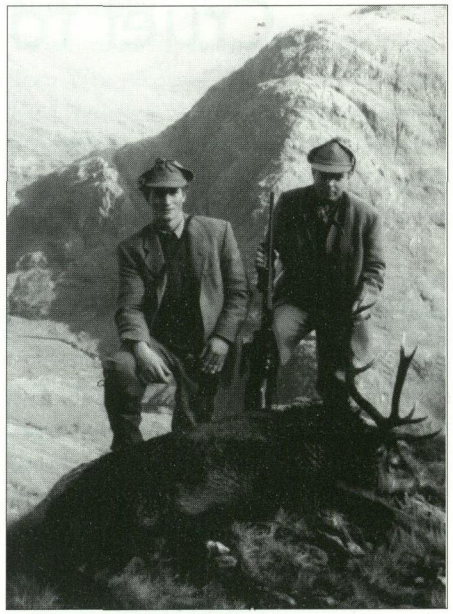
To achieve a reduction in the deer population across the entire area will require a sustained and brutal operation. If we postulate that the roughly 2000 deer on the JMT and the Foundation land are split 50/50 by sex, then we have a breeding population of 1000 hinds. In my experience, a population growth per annum of 30% is likely, and I have observed nearer 40% in better weather conditions. About 350 deer will have to be shot annually just to remain at a stable population level, and considerably more will have to be killed to achieve a reduction.

A well recognized phenomenon is that

the reduced population will indeed be healthier and will breed even more prolifically. Thus, even more deer will need to be shot as part of a sustained operation. Then, we have a further problem: as the population pressure eases, the grazing will improve. This will attract more deer from the surrounding areas. Even if a massive cull policy was enacted across the entire Knoydart Peninsula, deer would start to move into the newly freshened pastures from the mainland. The solution? A massive fence across the mountains might help, but deer also swim, you know. And in any case the cost would mop up the Trust's funding for quite a few years. No, the only solution is more and more shooting.

A consequence of your activity: as the deer numbers slowly reduce, you will find that neighbouring privately owned estates lose the incentive to maintain their expensive teams of stalkers and related equipment. To pay a couple of stalkers and keep all equipment up to the latest regulations must cost an average estate £50 000 a year. Income from venison is derisory, and in any case you have just glutted the market. Gradually the whole stalking and control infrastructure will slip away.

Yet another problem: deer do not like being shot at! Apart from anything else, such as being hit or wounded by a bullet, deer do not like noise and the legally required high velocity rifle makes a hell of a noise. As the shooting pressure increases, so the deer will become more



The author (right) and ghillie on typical terrain during an unusually fine Knoydart day. The stag was neck shot and dropped instantaneously.

wary and difficult to locate. Eventually, if the numbers are to be brought in within the limited shooting season required by law, the only feasible policy will be to shoot on sight, without selection or mercy. In fact, a policy which says shoot every beast you see (within the laws of the shooting seasons) which presents a fair target is probably as humane as you can get. But however good the shooters, the process is going to get very messy.

I should now perhaps issue a warning. What follows is not for those of a squeamish disposition, but I feel you should come on a brief stalk with me.

IT IS RAINING and blowing hard. You are on your fifth day of battling against the weather, and you are cold, wet and stiff. You have managed to get in position above a group of very jumpy hinds. Crawling forward over the rocks and bog, you manage to get into a safe firing position and manage to get the rifle up on its bipod. The telescopic sight is constantly fogging, and the rifle, which is such a miracle of precision on the range, is a clumsy burden. At about 100 yards you can just about make out that the beasts are female, and thus shootable.

The very first hind that shows clear, you will attempt to shoot in the neck. The lethal area is about two inches in diameter; the reason for going for the neck is that if hit correctly the hind will drop and not run. Deer shot in the heart will run for maybe 70 yards, and all the other deer will be off. You cannot afford that if you are to get the numbers that the cull needs. Those of you who want to, can try this at home or in a park: go for a quick run, crawl across rocky ground for 30 minutes without showing, then try to align a broom handle on a three inch target at one hundred yards whilst someone throws a bucket of water at you.

In a slight clearing of the mist, you manage to get the crosshairs aligned, and if you are a very good marksman, you will get a shot placed in the neck, and the hind drops. If you miss, which is bound to happen at some stage, the whole herd will disappear, and let us hope it was a clean miss and not a smashed jaw condemning the beast to a slow death by starvation.

Let us assume you have a hit. For all practical reasons she is dead, although life probably departs only after some period of paralysis. With numbed fingers you rapidly work the bolt to reload. Meanwhile, all hell has broken loose at the sound of the shot and the group of hinds are moving back and forth, stopping, looking, moving again, trying to work out where the shot came from. There are very few marksmen who can hit a moving target, particularly in driving rain. You wait and in a split second one hind stops, almost broad side, and you fire again, this time in the heart/lung area of her chest. You don't have the time to place a neck shot, and the hind although well hit runs 40 yards before collapsing. (There is massive damage to heart and lungs as the high velocity expanding bullet smashes into the tissues. Death results from blood loss to the brain.)

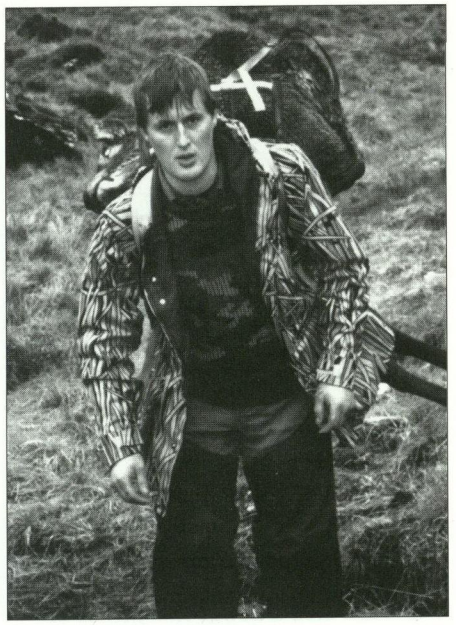
As she dies you realize that a small figure, a calf, seemed to be close to her, and appeared to follow her as she ran. It may well be her calf, born in June. Left without a mother, there is little chance of the calf surviving; you should shoot him or her, the alternative is death by starvation. However, technically, you should not be shooting male deer out of season. Is the calf male or female? In the gloom of a wet Knoydart in January, at

150 yards, how on earth can you tell? Incidentally, the deer are now streaming down hill, almost out of practical range.

The calf dies. You manage another two shots before the group vanishes, one beast takes a shot in the front of the chest and goes straight down. Desperate to get the numbers in, you fire at another just as she moves up a slope, and the shot goes low, smashing a foreleg. You get to her as soon as possible, and she looks at you as you finish her off...

Four hinds and a calf for an afternoon's work. What I am describing is the likely achievement of a very, very good marksman before too much shooting has taken place; in fact I am being optimistic, there will be other days when it not possible to get within range at all. Under better circumstances, it is possible to shoot more beasts. I have personally managed seven in one outing, but that was an unsuspecting family group who had not been subject to a cull for many months, and I have far more experience than most. The disruption and the activity of a sustained cull will make matters much more difficult, and you only have from the 21st October to the 15th February to cull female deer legally.

Of course your job might be easier if you were able to prevent public access to the hills, for hill walkers frequently move deer around, quite unknowingly. But I do not see that the John Muir Trust could consider that course of action! It is also



Carcass extraction in winter is backbreaking work.

possible to get a license to shoot deer out of the legal seasons, but shooting of heavily pregnant hinds is something I would prefer not to contemplate.

Now you have to gut the carcasses and try to drag them down to the vehicle before dark, unless of course you have elected to try and do without vehicles, in which case you will have to let the bodies rot where they are; ponies could not cope with the numbers. Given the outcry that would follow if you left the remains on the hill (actually an ecological approach, since the nutrient returns to the soil) the vehicle wins. Sorry about the tracks on the hill.

You get back in the cold, and before you can get out of your wet clothes, you have to dress the carcasses, often in poor and unhygienic conditions. Have you seen the average Scottish deer larder? When you eventually get home, as you clean your rifle, you muse that tomorrow you are going to have to do the same thing, and the following day, and the next day... at some stage your marksmanship will fail you, and you will have to finish off the wounded with a knife. The legality of this may be questionable, but there are many times when you cannot use a high velocity rifle at close range. (Pieces of bullet fragment and fly around at maybe 3000 feet per second.)

How many pairs of the most beautiful eyes will you close forever over the next weeks?

I have shot a large number of mammals, generally within an official management plan. I practice on a regular basis, and am lucky enough to be able to afford the best kit I can find. I believe I am probably more equipped than most to deal with an animal's death. But I cannot easily find the words to describe the profound depression that enshrouds the stalker engaged on major control work, like a deep, dark Knoydart cloud, as day after day you pile bullets into unsuspecting creatures whose only fault is being born and existing. Any person who does not feel a repugnance for the sheer bloody scale of such an exercise should not be behind a rifle in the first place.

It will probably come as a surprise to you fellow members of the Trust, to know that some form of counselling will be no bad idea for whoever you choose to do this job for you. And I would further recommend that you never allow just one or two individuals to be left alone with the job, day after day.

There is a lot more to land ownership than enjoying the scenery. ■

● *Roger Wadsworth owned Camusrory Estate from 1988 to 1993. He founded the Knoydart Deer Management Group, and is currently Vice Chairman of the SE England Branch of the British Deer Society. He has studied and stalked mammals across four continents, and coaches a variety of shooting disciplines. He combines shooting with a variety of conservation activities. He is a Life Member of the Trust.*

Computer wasteland?

Graham Carey wishes to contact others who "harbour doubts and distastes with regards to the mass personal computerisation of the earth." Initially he would send a paper "The new wasteland: Slight cause for anxiety?" Graham says: "There are a wide range of hazards and genocidal possibilities which very few are aware of." Contact him at 6 Granville Tce, Bingley, W Yorks BD16 4HW, tel 01274 568973.

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Land and property

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The John Muir Award

A huge step forward

Successful Heritage Lottery Fund Application

In September the Heritage Lottery Fund in Scotland announced funding support for the Award from their revenue grants programme totalling £171 000 over three years. We applied to the HLF in March as part of the Award's strategic development plan. The funding is to employ two development workers to support and develop the Award in Scotland. The objectives set out in the funding application are:

1. Ensure there are Award participants in all Scottish regions
2. Increase Award participation to 2000 people per annum
3. Ensure 25% of participants are from socially excluded groups
4. Support and consolidate existing Award organisations and groups
5. Provide training and residential opportunities for leaders and participants
6. Develop local steering groups and practitioners' networks.

We hope to be appointing the new development workers early this year. We will introduce them to you in the next Journal.

This is a huge step forward for the Award. It will enable us to offer greater support to our partner organisations, and groups that are already involved in the award. Also, to engage with people that have been excluded from being involved in the conservation of their natural heritage.

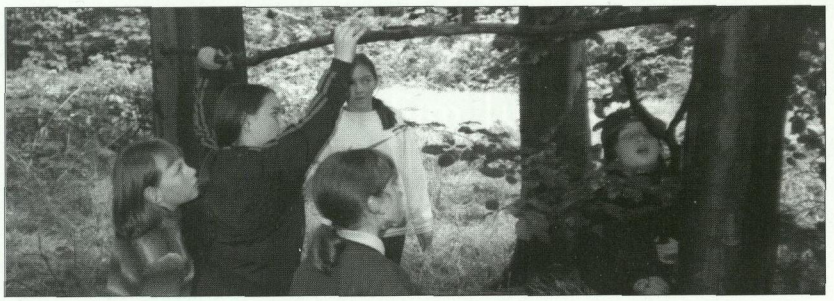
Hopefully it will free up some of my time to support and develop Award activity outside of Scotland.

My thanks go out to all of you that that have contributed to the success of the Award over the past years. Without your efforts, we would not have received funding from HLF. ■

David Picken
John Muir Award Manager

Mountain Images site

Mountain Images of Lockerbie introduced secure on-line shopping last summer. You can buy Ian Evans's prints and posters along with artist Paul Craven's limited edition prints, and Munro Magic greetings cards. Why not check out the new site at www.mountainimages.net, or go directly to the new on-line shop at: www.mountain-images.co.uk/shop_on_line.htm Telephone & fax are 01387 810219.



"We learnt loads about the trees and how they survive and why we need them."

The discovery of Binning Wood

In August last year the Primary 7 classes from Longniddry Primary School worked on their Discovery Award. With teachers Mrs Gillanders, Mrs Walink and Mrs Murray they went on a week's residential experience in East Lothian. Binning Wood near Dunbar was their focus.

The wood,originally planted in 1707, was cut down in wartime, then replanted by the 7th Earl of Haddington from 1945-1960. The result is a superb mixed woodland of Scots pine, birch and other trees. It's one of the last haunts of the red squirrel in this area (greys have just moved in).

In November, Mandy Calder (John Muir Award East Lothian) was invited by Primary 7 to a presentation of the Binning Wood leaflets. The children showed slides of their Award activities, and Mandy took part in their tree planting for the Millennium.

Perhaps the children's enjoyment comes over in their replies to the question "What would you tell others interested in going for the John Muir Discovery Award?"

I would tell others that getting the award feels fantastic, and makes you feel so proud. All the hard work and effort pays off and it is an absolutely great experience to have. – Stephanie

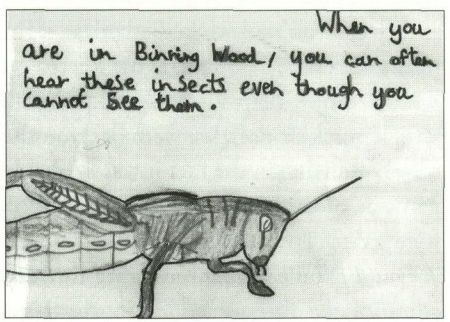
I would tell others that the award is really fun and it can teach you a lot about John Muir and conservation. It is quite a challenge but worth it in the end. – Eilidh

I would tell others that the award is very interesting and loads of fun. You have a pleased feeling when you have done something for the community. – Ross

I would say definitely go for it! It is a chance of a lifetime and one you would remember. We really enjoyed ourselves at Binning Wood. – Andy

Helen Gillanders said: "As the class teacher involved I would fully endorse the comments the children have made. This award gives the children a purpose for studying their environment, looking at conservation issues in a context which is real for them.

"The children loved getting involved with the surroundings and were equally enthusiastic about sharing their ideas, knowledge and concerns with others by producing the leaflets. My class knew very little about John Muir in August but are fired up to try in their own way to continue his philosophy of 'making the mountain glad'". ■



Part of a Binning Wood leaflet

Stretch yourself on a fundraiser

Following the overwhelming demand for our two fundraising trips last year, we are running an expanded programme for 2001. The four journeys, totally different and equally challenging, are:

- **24-29 May – From source to sea in open canoe down the Spey (see Colin Hogarth's account overleaf)**
- **19-26 May – Sail with Chris Loynes on Tigh Mara around JMT properties and the Small Isles**
- **23-29 June – Sea kayak off the west coast**
- **1-7 September – The wilds and luxuries of Rum**

Not only are these trips fun, educational, and adventurous; they raise funds to run the Award programme. We will provide any training and specialist kit required. For full details, call or email for a leaflet, or visit our website www.jmt.org

Information bank

Eric Gendle (JMT NE England) suggests that members who have visited more exotic locations could contribute to a JMT information service.

"For example I have visited Utah, Arizona and parts of the West Indies (some very wild land in the rainforests there). And I would be interested in talking to any knowledgeable members about the American or Canadian Rockies, and about Yellowstone." Eric is willing to keep a listing. Please contact him at 01642 281235, or 13 Mayfield Rd, Nunthorpe, Middlesborough, N Yorks TS7 0ED.

Rapidly down the Spey

Colin Hogarth enjoyed a John Muir Award canoe trip on, and in, the Spey last year. There are more waterborne expeditions this year – see the Award pages.

ONCE BITTEN, TWICE SHY. The phrase could so easily have been coined by someone who'd taken a dooking in the River Spey. When you've had the misfortune to roll out of a canoe into the decidedly chilly waters of Scotland's fastest flowing river once, it stiffens the resolve to stay afloat in future. Unfortunately, capsize is a bit of an occupational hazard when you're crashing over rapids, something I was to find out at first hand.

My rude awakening came early on in a five day paddle from Kingussie to Spey Bay and it was probably no bad thing. There's a terrible inevitability when you feel your canoe tipping to the point of no return. Myself and my fellow paddler Bill, from Ullapool, caught the branches of a fallen tree as we attempted to negotiate some tricky whitewater. We were tossed unceremoniously overboard and natural survival instincts quickly kicked in. Bill managed to swim safely ashore while I clung to the upturned hull of our craft, adamant she was not going to escape untethered downstream.

Once in, the swim was wonderfully bracing and a lifejacket ensured my head stayed above water. But it was tempered by the spectre of being crushed between the runaway boat and some jagged submerged rock, a feature, as we were to find out, not uncommon in the Spey. Thankfully help was at hand and the stricken vessel, with me stuck fast like a limpet, was guided safely into the shore.

The worst moment, however, was still to come – clambering out on to the beach only to be met by a chill wind which whistled through sodden shorts and fleece top and wicked a course right to my core.

Reviving coffee was close at hand and, after a quick dry off, we were back on the water, rejoicing in the fact it was probably just one of the many joys we had to look forward to.

Our 100 mile trip, meandering through some of the finest scenery Scotland has to offer, was organised by the John Muir Award. We hit the water on a bright Friday morning after a night spent at the RSPB's bunkhouse in the tiny hamlet of Insh. Our intrepid leader, John Muir Award manager Dave Picken, outlined a little of what we could expect over the coming days before RSPB warden Tom Prescott highlighted some of the flora and fauna we should be looking out for.

The Insh Marshes, through which the early part of our route passed, form a wetland of international recognition, hosting a diverse range of rare plants and insects and home to creatures such as the shy goldeneye duck, osprey and kingfisher. This is also one of the few places in the UK where you'll find the aspen tree.

There is talk of the beaver being introduced to this part of the Spey as part of a project being led by Scottish Natural Heritage.

It became clear at this point that we weren't going to escape without doing some work for our supper. Tom set us the task of spotting and recording some of the more unusual birds that live on the river, and we were also charged with noting where the elusive Aspen was growing.

The calm waters gave us an opportunity to get to grips with our Canadian canoes, transport and packhorse for the journey of discovery ahead, under the watchful eye of our instructor Vic Rathall.

The winding river took us down through the marshes, where early sightings were noted, before we were thrust out into the open waters of Loch Insh, a spirited headwind making our crossing hard work.

On the far side an osprey nest atop a tall pine tree was pointed out, its occupant soaring overhead. We then rejoined the river and paddled on to our first campsite of the trip. Tents pitched amid the scrub, we devoured supper hungrily before gathering round a blazing fire to while away the evening.

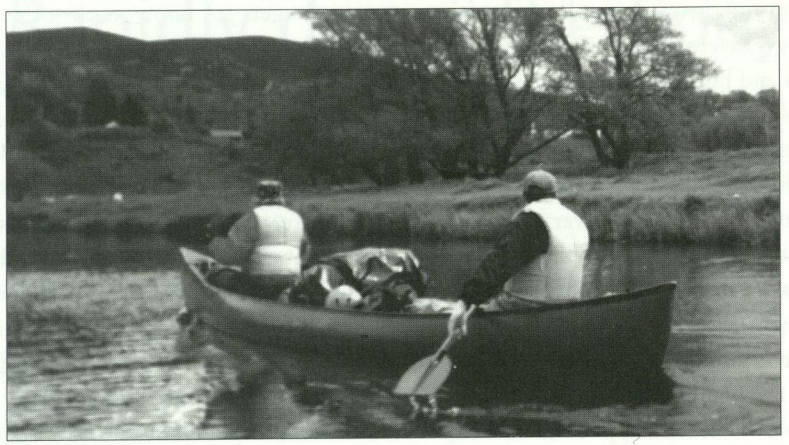
It was an ideal opportunity for everyone to get to know each other. The diverse range of people from all over the UK were all brought together by their interest in the work and ideals of the John Muir Trust.

Alan, a countryside ranger from Cheshire, was accompanied by his partner Morag; husband and wife Bill and Jean hailed from an island off the west coast, near Ullapool, while a contingent from London included Peter and his son Will and a second Peter. Don, from Somerset and in his sixties, was the oldest member of the pack, then there was Stewart, who works in Aberdeen's offshore industry, and me.

A good night's sleep followed and by early morning we were back on the water, heading north past the mouth of the River Feshie. Some rapids downstream provided ideal practice ground for skills tuition and it was a little further on from this that I endured my first capsize. Thankfully all the kit for a trip of this sort, from sleeping bags to food, is safely stowed in dry bags and barrels, lashed to the canoes to prevent escape and saturation when such a situation arises.

The sun was on hand to dry us out as we pulled into Aviemore for lunch. As we munched on our sandwiches, Dave explained how in years past timber felled in the pine forests of Rothiemurchus was floated from here down to the mouth of the Spey where it was used to build boats in the port of Kingston.

From Aviemore to Grantown-on-Spey the glen is fairly wide and wooded and



Dave (rear) and Don on a calm stretch near Aviemore (photo: Colin Hogarth)

there were tempting views to the Cairngorm plateau and neighbouring Bynack More, snow dusting the peaks.

Our next overnight stop was at a delightful little riverside campsite at Balliefurth where another roaring open fire was put to good use drying out wet clothes and shoes. This time we even had the luxury of a toilet and hot running water!

After two days of hard paddling through relatively slow, treacle-like water, day three saw us launch into a more energetic Spey. Rapids ahead sharpened our physical and mental focus, submerged rocks threatened to throw a spanner into the works at just about every turn.

Supplies were purchased in Grantown, a bustling little community of neat granite buildings founded in 1766 by James Grant of Castle Grant. As we returned to the river, the rain came on heavy but its presence did nothing to dampen spirits as stretches of white water were encountered and overcome.

One of the most exciting bits of the trip was a set of rapids just short of our next campsite at Blacksboat. We pulled in beforehand as Vic talked us through the challenge ahead. We departed one by one to face it. The first five boats came through unscathed but Dave and his partner for the day, Peter, were less fortunate, their craft rolling as they sped out of the rapids. Two boats down, four to go.

Blacksboat once boasted a railway station and the building and platforms have been preserved to provide a basic campsite for walkers trekking the recently opened Speyside Way. As we pitched by the platform, our prayers for better weather were answered as the clouds that had dominated the afternoon parted to

bless us with a beautiful evening. When dusk arrived, the station building erupted into life as scores of bats flitted out from under the eaves in search of their supper.

Day four was a late starter, the canoes remaining in dock until after midday due to salmon fishing on the next stage of the river. When we did get underway, Will and Don – who'd spent his evening drying wet clothes – took an immediate dip, their boat catching a riverbed rock broadside as they launched into the current.

With the river narrowing, another challenging stretch of white water was tackled lower down before a stop at Knockando where a brief foray was made into the Tamdhu distillery – one of the many distilleries in the Spey valley – only to find there were no free drams on offer.

More rapids followed but by now our expert tuition saw us sail through everything in our path and it was hard to believe we'd succumbed to such an easy obstacle earlier in the trip.

After navigating a series of hopeful fly-casting fishermen and passing beneath the impressive steel arch of Thomas Telford's bridge at Craigellachie, we went ashore for our final night's camp, taking advantage of another Speyside Way facility.

Famous for its salmon, we'd seen only occasional appearances from this graceful fish so far on our trip down the Spey, but that evening some local anglers casting their lines upstream from our camp were rewarded with an impressive 20lb catch.

The final day dawned after a restless night on my part. Perhaps it was the anticipation of more challenging waters ahead. Or maybe just not enough whisky before bed. Whatever, we teamed up in pairs, this time the lucky six who hadn't gone under each joining one unfortunate soul who had.

There were plenty more fishermen up to their wader-clad waists in the water to canoe round (our tally of brand new Range Rovers parked on the riverbank was now well into double figures) as we passed by Rothes and then on under the main Aberdeen to Inverness railway line. Another salmon was netted by an anxious angler who'd spent all morning out in the rain. He was clearly pleased his luck had finally changed as we drifted by.

The rain was to accompany us on the final leg of the voyage, much of it in the shadow of steep sandstone cliffs where pine trees clung precariously to the high bank, most just one good spate away from a tumble.

After a brief coffee break below Fochabers, we emerged from the narrow confines of the river into the wide splay of Spey Bay, the open sea occupying a perfectly flat line on the horizon ahead.

A flock of whooper swans welcomed us to journey's end and, as is all too often the case in Scotland, the weather perked up considerably as we hauled our gear up the pebble beach to board the bus home. The driver stuck closely to the River Spey, offering us a land-based overview on our waterborne adventure.

The trip was certainly a voyage of dis-

covery for me. I'd started at Kingussie with next to no canoeing skills but could now handle such a craft reasonably confidently. I'd spotted unusual birds and plants I'd perhaps otherwise never have noticed and gleaned a completely new perspective on this wonderful part of Scotland. Despite glancing blows with civilisation, the trip had been a great opportunity to get away from all those pesky distractions of modern day life, like television, cars, mobile phones and all the other things we think we can't get by without. Maybe we can? ■

● *Colin Hogarth is a journalist, working for The Courier and Dundee Evening Telegraph newspapers. Living in Arbroath, his interests include hillwalking, backpacking and downhill skiing. Colin also edits* walkscotland.com, *an internet magazine for walkers in Scotland.*

Who did you say you were?

Living far from JMT properties, I often need to explain who I'm doing work for. And it's tricky to find the words.

A slogan (however good) like "conserving wild places for nature and people" isn't enough. And life is too short to say that the trust is based in Edinburgh, owns so many properties in Scotland, and works in partnership with such and such communities.

The only words guaranteed to get home are "the people who bought Ben Nevis".

One day, everyone will know the name – like the Sierra Club or the national trusts. But in the meantime, can you help me find a snappy, factual one-liner that captures what's unique about the JMT?

Send your ideas by 1 March. The best one wins a surprise gift from Tiso the Great Outdoor Specialist.

Mike Merchant

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A Day in the Life of ... Andrew Campbell

Andrew (now Land and Property Manager) talks about his years as manager of the Trust's woodlands.

I LIVE IN TORRIN with my family. We moved here 6 years ago having built a house on our croft. At the moment my office is in our house.

I usually start the day by checking email – it's the only real routine I have in this job. Work tends to keep me outdoors for about three-quarters of the time. When the weather's bad, I tend to catch up on the paperwork in the office.

My job is woodland manager for all the Trust lands, not just for Skye, and as a result I actually spend around a third of my time on the mainland.

Starting with Knoydart, at Li and Coire Dhorcaill we're well on the way to completing our third woodland enclosure, a 200 hectare area for the natural regeneration and planting of native species. It's the biggest enclosure we have undertaken in this area. I'm also a director of the Knoydart Forest Trust. The aim of this Trust is to conserve, regenerate and promote the restoration of native and other woodlands in the Knoydart area.

Over the last year, Schiehallion has brought something new for me because I've been working on the whole land management side, and not purely woodland related activities. Everyone mucks in at Schiehallion. There are some conifer plantations, and the potential for a lot of native woodland regeneration. Skye – Torrin, Sconser and Strathaird estates – is where most of our woodland work has been to date. Strathaird has about 260 ha of exotic conifers in several blocks, planted by the Forestry Commission and the previous landowner. We're aiming to convert these conifer woodlands to predominantly native broadleaved woodland as well as encourage new areas of native broadleaves. The idea began with [former JMT director] Terry Isles, and many of the works carried out to date have been part funded by the Millennium Forest for Scotland and the Forestry Commission's Woodland Grant Scheme. You can imagine the paperwork needed to satisfy these two separate funding bodies.

On the ground, the forestry work includes fencing, felling, planting, weeding, deer control, pathworks etc. We use JMT work parties when we can for jobs such as planting, nursery works, seed collection and taking down old

fences. I also try to use local contractors for other more specialised or larger woodland works such as fencing and tree felling. In order to restructure the predominantly even-aged conifer blocks, felling and the subsequent replanting is carried out on a relatively small scale. This breaks up the shape of the existing blocks, aiming for a more diverse structure and a mix of species. When designing this I take into consideration the contours and the shape of the land, the soil conditions, the flora and fauna, the recreational opportunities, archaeological sites and the overall appearance of the woodland. As you can imagine this takes time. And it costs a lot!

Andrew and friend in the field

Also on Torrin and the crofted area of Strathaird, I have been involved with native woodland planting and regeneration in several Crofter Forestry projects. These are woodland projects that have been undertaken by the Grazing Committees.

During the spring and summer months conservation work parties, both JMT groups and several other volunteer groups, occupy a good deal of my time. As many of these activities take place over weekends I, and the Trust, have to be fairly flexible over my "working week". Keith Miller, JMT Conservation Manager, and I tend to run many of these conservation activities together, ensuring that volunteers hopefully get the opportunity of a variety of activities.

Before groups arrive, we have to ensure there is sufficient work for the group, and that tools, equipment, materials etc. are available ; as well as contingency plans for poor weather or more people arriving than we anticipated.

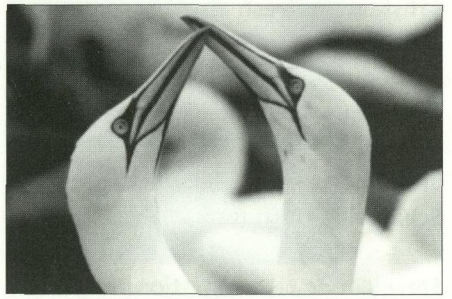
After work? I play badminton for Broadford, and can regularly be seen sailing on Loch Slapin. There are three of us with sailing boats around the loch, so we have a sort of mini flotilla – including a Laser, an International 505, a 4-berth Sailor along with a rowing boat and several canoes.

However as you read this, I'll probably be in the French Alps, on our yearly skiing trip, enjoying the snow, sun and vin chaud. ■

The Scottish Seabird Centre

Sustainable tourism in action

NORTH BERWICK, a short distance along the coast from John Muir's birthplace at Dunbar, is home to a fascinating new tourist attraction – the Scottish Seabird Centre. Opened by HRH The Prince of Wales in May 2000, the centre allows visitors to get close to wildlife without disturbing it.



Gannets (photo: Scottish Seabird Centre)

Using the latest technology, including microwave links, visitors can control cameras on the island of Fidra and the nearby Bass Rock to see puffins, gannets and many other birds in detail and in their natural habitat, without disturbing them.

Over 100 000 gannets return to the Bass Rock (the world's largest single rock gannet colony) every year, and their numbers have been increasing by around 4% annually. You can use the cameras to see these amazing birds crammed onto the Rock and view their fascinating behaviour.

The £3 million centre aims to increase awareness and appreciation of Scotland's rich natural environment. Environmental education is a key objective, and funding is being sought to fit out an environmental education centre.

Sustainability extends beyond ensuring that the stars of the show (the seabirds themselves) are not disturbed. For example, wherever possible, materials used in the centre's construction, like stone and wood, were sourced locally. It is a striking landmark building, which has helped to regenerate the North Berwick harbour area.

Visitors are encouraged to arrive by public transport. The centre has teamed up with Scotrail to provide a discounted return train ticket from Edinburgh with entry to the centre. North Berwick is only half an hour from Edinburgh by a frequent train service.

The centre is run by a charitable trust and is non-profit making. You can support its work, receive regular newsletters and have unlimited access for one year by becoming a member (only £12 annually). ■

● *The Scottish Seabird Centre, The Harbour, North Berwick EH39 4SS. Tel 01620 890202, www.seabird.org .*

Being positive on Schiehallion

"The staff enthusiasm, sense of satisfaction, fresh air and cameraderie are hard to beat. It is also educational and supports a good cause." – One of the managers from BP's West of Shetland business unit who took part in work meets on Schiehallion last year.

Steve Green, a completions engineer in the unit, and JMT Trustee Irvine Butterfield tell how it was for them.

STEVE: Use your imagination

STAFF FROM THE Aberdeen based unit volunteered two of their weekends to help the JMT on Schiehallion, and BP supported them by a donation to the JMT for every day's work by every volunteer. Offshore staff on the *Paul B. Loyd Junior* oil rig also earned donations from BP by meeting their Health, Safety and Environmental targets. Overall £118 500 has been raised.

The catalyst for BP's involvement was the JMT's purchase of Schiehallion, the mountain after which one of the company's oilfields is named. Four members of staff (two already in the JMT) suggested that BP should support the appeal. Thanks to Ian Searle, John Potts, Ronnie Parr and to all the staff who have so far volunteered.

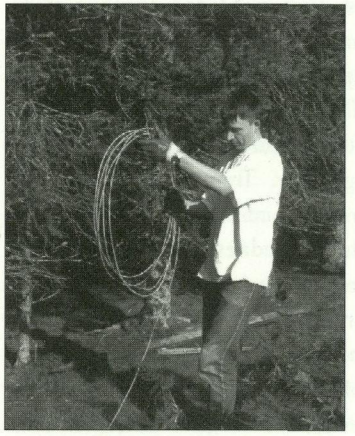
I doubt if others will have such an obvious company connection as an oilfield named after a JMT property! But it helps to devise some imaginative way of linking support. Perhaps staff involvement, perhaps a donation for every HSE or business target met, perhaps funding a tree for every ton of CO_2 emissions; perhaps a donation for every unit of power you save compared with last year.

Our first weekend in June saw us wading through heather to set up three survey lines which will be used to monitor the impact on vegetation of the Trust's stewardship. We learnt that Schiehallion is not only about footpath restoration, but also about how to improve habitat.

In a gorge inaccessible to grazing animals, a few trees remained, and looking carefully beneath the heather, seedlings of birch and rowan could be seen up to 100m away. One old rowan with a gnarled stem only two inches high must have been chewed for years every time it poked its head through the heather.

On our second weekend we set about constructing kissing gates, in the process learning how to remove an 18in wide rock from 3ft down a 12in wide posthole! Meantime a team dismantling a derelict deer fence found out just how difficult it is to get posts out once they're in.

The purchase of high profile estates like Schiehallion may be the best way of recruiting, and raising awareness. It also broadens our geographical influence, creating new relationships and opportunities. So buying well-frequented places such as Schiehallion and Ben Nevis may put us in a stronger position to protect remoter wild land as well.



One of the BP workparty enjoying a rollup. (photo: Irvine Butterfield)

IRVINE: Being Positive

BY THE TIME I reached the carpark at Braes of Foss, sunbeams had broken through and one of the BP workparty was encouraged to remark that they seemed to enjoy good weather when they visited the mountain. Nothing like being positive I thought, but kept these sentiments to myself... it never pays to tempt the weather.

We split off into three groups, one to walk the newly established transects and to photograph some of the archaeological finds, another to help Keith Miller prepare the postholes for the new kissing gates on the access path, and the majority to join Andrew Campbell at the plantation west of the farm.

Instructed in the do's and don'ts of stripping a fence, parties of four spread out along the boundary to begin removing collapsed posts and untidy wire. I joined three of the BP team and from the outset it was obvious that BP could well stand for Being Positive. After a few strands of wire had been rolled as instructed we soon got the hang of it and the rolls began to pile up. Being Positive was certainly a maxim to be applied to the removal of the chicken wire along the base of the fence, as much of this was overgrown and had to be wrestled from the earth.

Les quickly got into his stride and by stretching the lower end of the wire he was able to snip away with vigour. Tina and Graham followed suit, and before we knew it our section of the fence was cleared, with the old stobs stacked neatly away in the wood, to be left to rot. By lunchtime another 100m section was down and we were well into the third.

Meanwhile back at the carpark Keith and his team had been hard at it, and already young Paul was well down into the deep hole dug for the strainer post. Despite a smirr of rain mid-morning, the weather seemed to be holding fine, with a stiff breeze from the west to fan perspir-

ing faces. Just right for another afternoon's hard graft.

The upper reaches of the plantation fence fell as the team got into its stride again and it wasn't long before all were labouring away. Transport of the wire down to the road was time-consuming; and by now tiredness was beginning to tell on muscles unused to the stretching and straining. But Andrew was well satisfied by the labours of the day and predicted that the rest of the fence would be cleared away by Sunday afternoon ... and so it proved.

That Saturday evening everyone assembled in the Ailean Chraggan for a few well earned drinks and dinner. The wind had put a bloom on many a cheek and it was obvious that they had relished being in the outdoors, after busy office life in Aberdeen. Lots of talk about another visit and and what else could be done. It was very much "can do", and I was left with a distinct impression that Steve and his loons fae Aiberdeen had well and truly adopted Schiehallion as "their mountain". ■

East ridge is key to restoring the hill

LESS THAN 18 MONTHS after buying East Schiehallion, the Trust has developed a plan to make good the path damage on the mountain.

A route starting at the existing Forest Enterprise car park, and using the hill's east ridge, is the key to the strategy. Use of this route will mean that restoration can start along the lower half of the present heavily scarred main path.

The Trust commissioned Margaret Thomas, an upland access management consultant, to report on access routes to and on East Schiehallion – whether on Trust land or from neighbouring estates. Given the numbers of walkers Schiehallion attracts, she recommended the east ridge route as the best management option. In August, the Schiehallion Group endorsed the report, at a well attended meeting in Coshieville.

It's felt that the east ridge is not only more able to stand existing heavy use; it's intrinsically a finer way, with more interest and better vistas in ascent, and provides the opportunity for a higher quality experience of the mountain. It was also a popular way to the top before the Braes of Foss car park was built.

The Trust is committed to recognizing and upholding people's freedom to roam. This fundamental principle applies throughout the year on east Schiehallion, as on all JMT properties. Although the Trust plans to re-establish the east ridge as a route that will withstand current and likely future traffic, there will be no restrictions elsewhere. Management work, and requests to visitors to help the restoration process, will enable damaged ground to revegetate.

From the car park at Braes of Foss, the planned route will go south, to the left of a small forestry block, past a cup-marked stone, and lead to a sheepfank at about 380m as on the present track from Braes of Foss to Gleann Mor. Path establishment will be needed. Uphill from the fank, the route follows the line of an existing narrow track, up to where it joins the present main track at 720m. On this section, the report says, "a narrow stalker style path could be sensitively created to blend into the terrain".

Above where the tracks join is Schiehallion's long summit ridge.

The four phases of work, says Keith Miller, the JMT conservation manager, are:

- the east ridge, from the fank to where the existing eroded route meets the ridge
- the route from the carpark to the fank
- revegetation of the existing eroded route
- path definition on the summit ridge

The phases could overlap a bit, but broadly speaking that is the order in which the work has to be done. Keith has been busy preparing tenders, and providing information for Alison McGachy, JMT development manager, to put together a grant application to the Heritage Lottery Fund to supplement money from the Schiehallion Appeal and the BP sponsorship.

Check the next Journal for a start date. In the meantime, it's proposed that Clare Thomas will do a detailed archaeological survey of the low level part of the route this spring, before the bracken comes up. It already looks promising. ■

Helen Meek

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Employee power

Alison McGachy, Development Manager, with ideas for creative company fundraising.

The marketplace for charitable organisations is becoming as cut-throat as Fleet Street these days. As more and more charities are being set up, companies are looking for more innovative ways of support than straight cash. So the Trust has to become smarter in the way it approaches them.

Gone are the days when you could send in a nice letter and a couple of photographs and a company would shell out thousands of pounds. We take time to develop relationships with influential people, and propose projects which fit with their values and beliefs.

However, in many cases it is employees who now seem to have power to control charitable donations. When I was on the charity committee of Scottish Equitable, we asked the employees to nominate charities, and to vote for one to support. Staff events raised about £20,000, and the company matched this. So by successfully nominating their favourite charity, a member of staff raised £40,000 for it.

The Trust has already received funding and in-kind support from companies where employees who are JMT members have promoted our work. Three examples:

- Steve Green, Ian Searle and John Potts from **BP** suggested supporting work on Schiehallion, which linked with their Schiehallion oilfield (see page 24).To date this has raised around £118,000 for Schiehallion.

- Andrew Herman from the ***Dunfermline Building Society*** suggested the Trust to his marketing department and they came up with the high yielding "Ben Nevis Bond". £1 comes to the Trust for each bond sold, and our leaflets are being displayed in all of their 34 branches.

Bank's summit sweep

Bank of Scotland financial planning consultants raised £515 (later doubled by the Bank itself) by a sponsored litter collection on the Ben Nevis tourist path and summit.

The team was Donnie Montgomery, Fort William, Michael Thompson, Kyle of Lochalsh, Hugh Ross, Beauly, Dean Cunningham, Inverness, Alys MacPherson, Nairn, Neil Bremner, Aviemore, and Mary Laird, who remained fogbound in Kirkwall!

The sweep took place in late July, with the last half mile in wet cloud. Undaunted, they unfurled the bank's flag and got an onlooker to take a snap. He was, of course, a business customer with a Bank of Scotland London branch. ■

- Andrew Ward from the **Nationwide Building Society** called me to say that they could not offer any financial support, but would be more than happy to host a corporate lunch for the 50 multi-nationals with HQs in Swindon. The Trust could also use their 120 seat lecture theatre for talks.

These are just a few examples of the way that you, as Trust members, can provide support. If your employer does some sort of charity work, why not suggest the Trust as a recipient?

Remember that help in kind can be just as valuable as cash. More examples:

- **Tiso's** provides free office space in Edinburgh, and displays our material in its 13 shops across Scotland and Northern Ireland. **Standard Life** previously supported the production of the Journal, saving us thousands a year, and of course the paper for the Journal you're reading now was supplied by **Donald Murray Paper.** ■

Stamps please!

Why not collect used stamps from the postcards and letters that you receive at home or at work and send them to the Trust? Money can be gained from old stamps once they are sorted and tidied up so please tear off a large border around the stamp and send to the Leith office.

How to give it away!

Tony Gladstone writes:

Higher rate taxpayers should know how the Chancellor's budget changes last year could enable them to donate share dealing profits to the JMT at very little cost to themselves!

Suppose you were lucky enough to subscribe for 10,000 shares in "Realflyer.com" at the opening price of 10p; they have now risen to a ridiculously overvalued £2.50, and you want out.

If you sell the shares (assuming you have already used up your annual capital gains tax (CGT) allowance and neglecting broker's fees) you will end up with £15 400: that is, £25,000 – £9600 (40% of your £24,000 gain).

If on the other hand you donate them, the JMT being a registered charity benefits from the full £25,000, AND this entire amount can be offset against your income at your highest tax rate. Assuming that this is 40%, your tax is reduced by £10 000, and so your 25K donation to the Trust has actually only cost you £5400!

Given Nigel and the rest of the team's ability to "multiply" your donation with grants from the Lottery, SNH etc, your 25K might be increased to 100K (almost a quarter of the cost of Ben Nevis) and all for an amount which next year will probably buy you just enough petrol to get to Fort William and back!

Protecting the Moffat Water wildlife?

Roy Carlaw, a retired forest manager from Lockerbie, writes on his serious concerns about the Borders Forest Trust's Carrifran Wildwood project. We asked Philip Ashmole, director of the Borders Forest Trust, to reply.

THE PHILOSOPHY of the JMT is built on Muir's unique strengths; honesty and integrity. Muir would have achieved little without his transparent, unshakeable honesty.

At Stonar [JMT West of England meeting] I learnt how the JMT works inclusively with local communities, keeping them fully informed, integrated on management committees.

The Carrifran group came to Moffat and talked *at* locals. Having looked at 10 potential sites, the group bought the only one with a resident feral goat population. Carrifran contained 44% of the Moffat Water feral goat herd (SNH census), which has roamed freely for centuries.

With another 9 troublefree options available, no forester would choose such a site. There will inevitably be problems during establishment. And today, even commercial foresters accept that wildlife must be at least tolerated.

Carrifran was brilliantly marketed to a generous if naive public as a "semi-natural wildwood", a refuge for "future wildlife". It is not natural, a point accepted by Nigel Hawkins. It is artificial; designed and planted by man, extensively using chemicals to kill the natural vegetation, whilst surrounding plants with unsightly plastic tubes. It will never be a "wildwood", if only because free public access has been guaranteed.

To establish this "wildwood haven" of 50+ years time, the group publicly announced (18 Nov 1999) that they will kill "any deer found in Carrifran after 1 Jan 2000", a draconian decision unacceptable in normal forestry.

The group's formal protection plan includes planting willow, not as a constituent of the plantation, but strategically where it will be easy to shoot deer, lured to feed on the sacrificial willow.

This "wildwood, animal loving" group intends to kill any deer, old or young, male or female, pregnant or with calf at foot – to produce what? A haven for wildlife in some unforeseeable future!

In spite of sustained local protest (for example, an 83 year old lady gathered 1194 signatures in 10 days), many of the goats were secretly captured and taken to southern England. This operation was to be overseen by the SSPCA. Group employees used three dogs to gather the goats, in direct contravention of SSPCA policy.

The RSPB have a reserve at Loch Lomond, of natural oakwood containing red deer and feral goats. Like the JMT, they welcome local residents' input on committees, and respect their desire to retain the local goats. They work together. JMT and RSPB integrate successfully. It disturbs me that a group claiming associate status with the JMT fails to share their standard. ■

IT IS PRECISELY the inspiration of the work of John Muir that led Borders Forest Trust to seek an informal association with JMT. We also hope that as Roy Carlaw suggests, we can benefit from the experience of JMT in working with local communities.

We are inevitably distressed by the portrait of our group provided. No one who knew the 40 people who got the Wildwood project off the ground would recognise the picture painted.

On several points, Roy Carlaw is less than fair. For instance, it is true that the Wildwood Group looked at about 9 other sites, but several were quite unsuitable and not one of the others turned out to be available. In mid 1997, Carrifran – at a very high price – offered the only chance to bring the Wildwood vision to reality. Three years on, more than 600 people have become Founders by contributing at least £250, and hundreds more have made generous donations.

With regard to deer culling, it is hard to know where to begin. Roe deer will be welcomed as part of the community of native animals in the mature woodland. As a forester, however, Roy Carlaw must be aware that culling (or in smaller areas exclusion by deer fences) is needed in all woodland establishment schemes, since deer have no natural predators left in Britain. On one point, we erred. A statement in our deer management plan implied that we planned to lure deer onto sacrificial willow. After Roy raised the matter in a meeting, he publicly accepted my apology for the unfortunate wording and an asssurance that we would not do this.

Feral goats present an intractable dilemma, since they are attractive animals, but are not native and are immensely destructive to trees. Carrifran is part of an SSSI, and SNH agreed that removal was preferable to simply pushing them on to adjacent land.

It is sad that concern for feral goats should cloud the efforts of those who attempt to restore habitats for native wildlife. We have recently responded by delaying the removal of some of the goats for up to a year to explore possibilities for keeping them in the Moffat Hills.

The difficulty of our position was perhaps made clear in this letter from Innes Miller, OBE, who was chairman of the Deer Commission for nine years:

"I am convinced that goats were the prime factor in denuding upland Scotland of its native woodland; there is a report that one year in the eighteenth century 100,000 Scottish goat skins were sold in London; that would indicate a population of around one million goats. By browsing and bark stripping they destroyed the mature forest and suppressed regeneration. Sheep and deer just continued the elimination of new saplings." ■

Gàidhlig anns an arainneachd:
Gaelic in the environment

Gaelic journalist, writer and broadcaster Roddy Maclean (Ruairidh MacIlleathain) comments on some of the place names encountered in this edition...

Coire Dhorrcail (Knoydart): This is pronounced KOR-uh GHOR-kil. At this point it is worth noting that the English word "corrie", which has entered the language from Gaelic, is not pronounced the same as the original. The English version is KORR-ee; the Gaelic is KOR-uh. In the latter, the Gaelic "r" is softer and unrolled, and the tongue is placed closer to the teeth. The meaning of Coire Dhorrcail has eluded me and, indeed, its orthography is questionable. I suspect that its origins may lie in a Norse-named settlement on the coast, now known as Inbhir Dhorrcail (IN-yir GHOR-kil), for which the corrie and burn (Allt Coire Dhorrcail) close by were named. Perhaps a reader will assist me!

Camusrory (Knoydart): Pronounced Kam-us ROE-ree in English, the Gaelic original (modern spelling) is Camas Ruairidh (KAM-us ROO-uh-ree), meaning "Roddy's Bay". The modern orthographic convention of ending words, such as camas, in -as rather than the older -us is, by the way, likely to be followed by the Ordnance Survey which has recently agreed to update the Gaelic spelling on its maps to fit with modern usage. Such a move is to be welcomed as a recognition that Gaelic is a living language and that it must not be left on the maps in a fossilised form.

Màm na Cloich' Airde (Knoydart): The pass of the high stone (maam na kloich ARZ-duh).

Màm Meadail (Knoydart): The pass of Meadail (as in Gleann Meadail, but the meaning of "meadail" is obscure). It is pronounced maam MET-il.

Steall Glen Nevis): The Gaelic is an Steall (un STYOWL) which means "the water spout" or "torrent" and refers to the waterfall nearby.

Gartocharn (Loch Lomondside): Pronounced GART-oh charn in English, it is Gart a' Chàirn (garst uh CHAARN) in Gaelic, which means "the field of the cairn". Càrn is another Gaelic word which has entered the English language (as "cairn"). It appears in a genitive form (ie "of the cairn") in this place name; Gaelic is a highly inflected language, and place name elements may be either in the nominative or genitive forms which may appear, to the unitiated, to be significantly different from each other. The only way to master such intricacies, and to gain a full appreciation of the totality of the Highland landscape, is to learn the language!

- *Ma tha beachd agaibh air na sgrìobh Ruairidh bu mhath leis cluinntinn bhuaibh tron phost-dealain.*
If you have any comments, Roddy would be pleased to hear from you on macleanr@globalnet.co.uk

The skill of seeing

Profile of John MacPherson

Photographer John MacPherson's work appears on JMT brochures and cards, and is available as prints. We asked John about the background to his work and his support of the Trust.

Where were you born and brought up, where do you live now? Any other occupation?
I was born in Fort William, and now live in Roy Bridge. My grandparents used to have stables in Fort William at the turn of the last century and did the mail run around the district. They also hired ponies and attendants to the summit of Ben Nevis for one guinea (including lunch). My father Donald was a pioneer skier on Ben Nevis after the war, and also dabbled in black and white photography.

Outside photography, I am a Senior Officer in the Social Work Department in Fort William, managing a centre for adults with learning disabilities, and working on a job-share for two days a week.

What got you started in photography?
Photography grew out of travelling. I visited Africa a few times in my teens, then in 1980/81 I visited the USA for a year. I cycled from Texas to Los Angeles, sold the bicycle and bought a small motorbike on which I travelled 12 000 miles up into Canada, travelling along the Sierra and visiting many haunts of John Muir. It was my introduction to this son of Scotland, who was then little known in his own country. I returned to the USA several times and visited many other wilderness areas, with a particular affinity for the more deserty areas.

Photography was a good way to record the places and things I saw, and I have been doing it for 25 years.

Do you have a favourite subject or season to photograph?
I photograph all sorts of subjects (except weddings!). I am comfortable around wildlife, also with people and with the landscape. I do a fair amount of people photography. I am particularly careful in my use of light in my images, and try to use subtle or dramatic lighting effects to best show off the chosen subjects

What are the challenges and rewards of outdoor photography in Scotland?
The challenge is to capture the textures of the landscape and the subtlety of light we are blessed with. Sometimes the light is very dramatic and in-your-face, but

often it is more subtle and requires patience and consideration to use it to its best advantage. The reward comes when you show an image of a well-known but little considered place to someone and they sit back and say "Oh, I didn't realise it was so beautiful!" Often these are places which most folk may have ignored as they rushed to the honeypot locations like Glencoe. I call these images "celebrations of the ordinary", and I feel they may help make people reappraise what they mean when they say "we must preserve wilderness". There is as much of nature and "wildness" worth preserving at the bottom of many gardens as there is in the wilds of Sutherland. I feel that the full implication of the "think global, act local" message may not have come home to the vast majority of people. Photography can in some small way help to raise awareness of the richness and diversity that surrounds us.

Is there a particular photographer you admire from the past or present who has influenced you?

From the UK, Paul Wakefield, a landscape photographer who uses large format cameras to produce very well observed and atmospheric images. In the natural history field, I really admire Laurie Campbell's work. He is a thoughtful and very insightful photographer who works incredibly hard to create very intimate images of our native wildlife. The access he is able to get is due to many years of honing his stalking and fieldcraft skills. Gifted with the eye of an artist, he is responsible for some of the best, and most consistent, work coming out of Scotland.

There is a tradition of wilderness landscape photography in the USA, and a great many practitioners, but I admire the work of Robert Glenn Ketchum in particular for the ways in which his images force you to reassess what appears to be an "ordinary" landscape. Isolated by the borders of the photograph, his images portray the great beauty and wealth of detail that nature possesses. More than many other gifted photographers, he makes art out of seemingly ordinary subject matter.

Are there any moments which stick in your mind for being stunning/ dangerous / cold and uncomfortable?

I was trying to get pictures of a mother otter and cub feeding. I was using a 500mm lens and trying not to disturb them, but the motordriven camera attracted the mother's attention and she came to investigate. She ended up with the toe of my welly boot in her mouth, and spat it out in disgust, much to my relief I may add! The business end of an otter is full of sharp canine teeth, which could easily have taken off several of my toes with one crunch. A mature otter can be a metre long and weigh 12-15 pounds. A formidable animal to meet whilst flat on your stomach and laden with photo gear!

As a result of the hours I keep, and my activities at dawn and dusk with a 4x4 vehicle, I have been mistaken for a deer poacher, a drug smuggler and an egg thief, with all the threats, confusion, embarrassment and hilarity that such encounters can bring.

Perhaps the most rewarding experience of recent years was the period my partner Pip and I spent on Mull's west coast, making a film about otters on 16mm Arriflex equipment. We spent 18 months including two winters working in all sorts of conditions, living in the back of a Land Rover. We saw some amazing sights as otters interacted with sheep, seals, gulls, crows and other otters, and witnessed some amazing wrestling matches with prey such as octopus and crabs. We now have several hours of otter footage which we are trying to have broadcast – and the lasting mental images of a large school of mature and immature bottlenose dolphin leaping out of the water, in a bay lit with layers of steely grey and pink predawn light, on a cold, still New Year's morning, at -12 degrees. We didn't film, simply watched in awe.

What is your tip for those who enjoy taking photos out of doors?

For anyone who wishes to take landscape photographs in Scotland – get out there! The weather can be your biggest enemy, but the old adage "no rain, no rainbows" is a good one. Often the most marginal of conditions can offer the most rewarding opportunities. In the photography courses I sometimes lead I stress that equipment is less important than the skill of "seeing". The most important piece of equipment in fact lies about six inches behind the camera!

In terms of gear for landscape photography, a good tripod and a cable release are vital to do the job properly. Film is cheap relative to cameras and travel, so shoot lots, and learn from your mistakes.

Why did you join the John Muir Trust?

I became interested in the JMT about 10 years ago as I watched the way it strove to reverse some of the trends of land ownership in Scotland. I was impressed by the Trust's willingness to listen to local people, and its desire to couple Trust ownership of land with local control. I suppose like many others I was sceptical at first, but the Trust has maintained those values, built upon them, and committed itself to progress through partnership.

Do you have views on the value to people of wild scenery?

I have strong views on the value of wild places. As a photographer, I recognise that I have a great responsibility due to the nature of the work I do (pun intended!). It is all too easy to simply record the good stuff, to celebrate the glories of wild places. But as someone whose photographs will no doubt attract people to some places in particular, I feel that there also lies a responsibility to portray the downside – the erosion and other damage that can result. I do try to take a balanced

view, and was a fierce proponent of the ski development on Aonach Mor. I recognised the possible environmental consequences, but also the economic value for Fort William.

Photography has a vital role to play in environmental issues. Often the power of an image can have more impact than any number of carefully chosen words. My photography strives to record where possible the effects wrought by man as well as the natural splendour of "wild" Scotland.

The JMT does something that is fundamental to its success: it views people as an integral part of the landscape. Too often I have heard expressed notions of "wild land" which exclude people from the equation. Many JMT members will consider much of the land held in Trust as wild, but for those who live and work on it – shepherds, crofters, stalkers, mountain guides – it has a more tangible quality, of daily provision and sustenance, at a physical as well as an emotional level. Scotland's wild places are, and will continue to be, a result of man's intervention, and no sensible policy for development can exclude the presence of man. Indeed a landscape that has some value for man is one that will be preserved. It is this notion of value that I feel the JMT has carefully fostered, and it is the reason why folks like myself will continue to support the Trust.

What are your current projects, and have you got any particular photographic ambitions for the next few years?

I am working for SNH in Wester Ross to document a year in the life of the Beinn Eighe National Nature Reserve. It will be 50 this year, and was the first NNR in the UK. SNH has commissioned Niall Benvie and me to record the seasonal changes, visitor use and land management (reforestation, deer management, paths and facilities); and to attempt to record any of the local wildlife we encounter. We can also be creative, and take images with emotional content, that might impart some of the feeling of the reserve – its wildness and grandeur, but also its accessibility. The work will feature in many of the events and publications planned for the 50th birthday year.

Other ongoing personal work includes the bread and butter stuff for tourism use and agency sales. I recently completed a week-long Autumn landscape photography course, acting as guide/instructor for Wildshots, Ballintean, based in Glen Feshie, Strathspey. It was the first of a series of courses, and saw our group visiting Glencoe, Loch Maree, Glens Affric and Strathfarrar, and various spots in Strathspey.

On a daily basis there is the continual challenge of recording, whenever I am able, the ever-changing Scottish scene. ■

Meall nan Tarmachan

Hints of mist and haze
surround a soft spring day.
Almost no wind.

Beyond the summit cairn
a young grouse interrogates us
from a dwindling snowfield.

A large frog quizzes us
from under a lump of peat.
I wonder, what do frogs do
in a heron-free zone
above three thousand feet.

On the way down
are tadpoles in clear lochans
in writhing black zillions.
Deer on a dun-coloured hill
crop audibly, barely visible.

But not a ptarmigan
in sight all day.

From the sequence *A climber's year* by Gordon Jarvie.

No fish, no blaeberries!

The Schiehallion Group received a donation from Jimmie Wilson now resident in Finchle, who writes:

"A very long time ago (1911-1913) I spent my summer holidays with my uncle, aunt and cousin, the MacLeans at Braes of Foss where my uncle was the shepherd, and I climbed Schiehallion many times, getting my knees scratched by the heather. To get there from Aberfeldy I travelled on the top of a MacKerchar and MacNaughton horse-drawn van as far as Coshieville, where another one took me to Braes of Foss.

"After the war I went back to the Schiehallion burn to fish, but didn't see a fish because the troops had 'caught' them all using hand grenades."

He writes that he and his wife on reaching the path to the top found the biggest patch of blaeberries they had ever seen. On return from the car with a container to hold them they had disappeared. Thus they returned empty handed – "no fish, no blaeberries". ■

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Knoydart on foot

Ross Miller

"WAIT FOR ME at the col!" I gasp. The Great Dane nods, then plods steeply upwards. I pull my hat further down to stem the flow of sweat, sit on a hot rock, and reflect that, whilst walking from Glenfinnan to Knoydart looked straightforward on a map, things are different in reality. I lurch upwards trying to breathe deeply. At last the gradient slackens, and with a final push I reach the top. I can see a rucksack, but where is he? "It's nice over here," a voice informs me, and there he is, wallowing in the shade.

There is no noise save our chatting, and no movement other than some distant deer. Down below lies Glen Pean. Two hours later, as muscles and light fade, we reach the bottom. The tent goes up easily and spirits rise as we realise this is steak night. As I hack up my piece of undercooked meat and slurp my red wine, Glen Pean looks impressively wild. I can see how others have described it as "Indian country". The stars come out by the thousand, but the warm sleeping bag beckons.

We start early to avoid some of the heat. At 6am there is ice on the tent, by 7.30 we are off into the forest, past an unseen Loch Arkaig and up an unseen Glen Dessary. We climb gradually through the trees, easy miles. Two hours later it's hot, we have seen no one and we are at the edge of the trees. Ahead is a steadily rising landscape of grass and rocks. As we go higher the latter predominate. The path, tiny now, takes a cunning, effort-minimising line. At last, at the rocky vastness of the summit, we sit, get our breath back and stare in awe. Just below is a lochan. There are a lot of small fish, but no means to catch them, so out comes the packet soup.

We set off again into a gorge, the Mam na Cloich Airde, which narrows dramatically. This is wild stuff, I reflect, as we follow scratch marks along rock terraces high above the burn. What would it be like on a wet, windy day? At the bottom, we meet two travellers plodding upwards. Now is the time to be sadistic and tell them "It's helluva steep up there". They tell us that they left a distant Inverie at 9am; maybe they won't find it so steep. Down again, now on a good path constructed, the book says, for the former herring fisheries. We level out; this is Loch Nevis. Minutes later we reach Sourlies bothy.

There is a dead sheep five yards away, and the stench is awful. The bothy logbook says the sheep expired three days ago. We push on, round the head of the loch. I see a bridge and think "Let's cross it, then camp". We cross the rickety bridge, to see a notice: "Camp Only at Bothies. No Wild Camping". This is bizarre: we are in a totally empty landscape, so just who are we going to disturb?

It is 6pm and we are tired, but being law abiding souls, we climb the steep steep slopes of Mam Meadall. At last, a semi-level terrace hidden from below. Out comes the tent. It's dried dog food night; 20 minutes cooking transforms it to wet dog food. The view is our compensation: there is mountain, sea and sky. Nothing else.

Next morning, we feast on the view, then eat some breakfast. Upwards again, a lot of zigzags to the col. We can see the coast; Inverie must be there. We cross another rickety bridge with another edict about no wild camping, and start talking and thinking of the Great Pints of Beer. Well over an hour later, Nirvana is attained, and we can camp for free, behind the village.

Later, over huge prawns, we discuss whether to reverse the walk to Glenfinnan, or stroll to Barrisdale and back, then escape to civilisation by the Mallaig boat. All these steep descents would become nightmare ascents, so Barrisdale wins.

On next morning's pleasant stroll up Gleann an Dubh Lochain, cuckoos do their stuff and the earth seems fair. Wait a minute, what's that scratch up on the hillside? – it's the path crossing Mam Barrisdale. This is the worst yet, we agree. The col is superb, though, as you can almost touch Barrisdale and we can see most of Kintail. But why all the tents?

On the lush glen floor, our tent joins 15 others in front of the bothy. Up to now, other than at Inverie, we have seen seven people, all of whom we have bantered with. Now, we are in the midst of 20–30, but no one talks to us – in fact, they all walk around looking at the ground. Realisation dawns. They are Munroists!

The Great Dane is puzzled. I tell him about Munro, his list and his problems with the Pinnacle, of how the Rev Robertson succeeded, of how less than 200 people had completed by the early 70s. Then I tell him how it became special maps, colour coded pins, guidebooks, CD-ROMs and the ticking of lists.

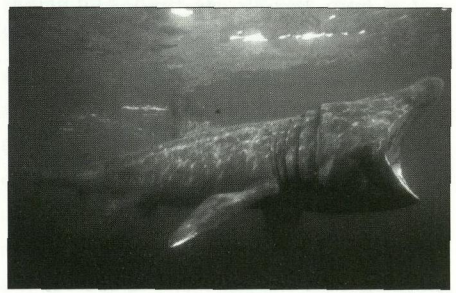
Our discussion matures over a Macallan and is enlivened when one of the Munroists dispatches his dog to chase three deer which threaten the orderliness of the glen.

Next morning, back the way we came. The Mam is even more of a brute in reverse, the summit sweeter still. Now it's downhill all the way, a swim in the loch, beers at the pub, and 49 hours later we are standing in diesel fumes outside Luton Airport, watching every bus except our own roll up. ■

● *Ross Miller lives in Cambridge. To compensate for the flatness, he periodically escapes to the mountains. This is about a trek he made with a Danish friend, Preben Thomsen.*

Marine Conservation Society Scotland

After 21 years campaigning for the protection of the UK marine environment, the Marine Conservation Society appointed Calum Duncan as its first officer for Scotland. Calum writes:



Basking shark
(photo: © J Stafford-Deitsch)

THE POST WAS CREATED to raise public awareness of Scotland's seas and the pressures they face, and to encourage active marine conservation. Through presentations to interest groups of all kinds we are raising the profile, and involving people in these three active conservation projects.

Seasearch

Recreational SCUBA divers can contribute to our knowledge by taking part in Seasearch, the MCS survey scheme for the diving community. Divers wanting to get more from their sport accurately record their dive profile and the habitats and wildlife encountered during their Seasearch dive. Typical habitats include muddy loch bottom, boulder field, or bedrock. These could be associated with brittle star beds, kelp park, or encrusting sponges respectively. Records appear on www.seasearch.org, and in a Scottish Seasearch newsletter. Reports of sufficient quality may be included in statutory conservation reports. Fifteen Seasearches have been conducted in Scotland, and with over 11 000km of coastline there is infinite scope for more.

Basking Shark Watch

For those enjoying the sea from above the waves, this project encourages enthusiastic wildlife spotters, on boat or ashore, to record the size, number and behaviour of these magnificent filter-feeding summer visitors to Scotland's west coast. Basking Shark Watch is integrated with UK-wide photographic identification, tagging and genetic studies to help elucidate where these gentle giants over-winter, mate and gestate. Basking sharks are protected in UK territorial waters, thanks largely to 10 years of Basking Shark Watch sightings data from MCS supporters. When the scheme is relaunched this year, your sightings could provide evidence to help extend the protection.

Beachwatch and Adopt-a-Beach

Marine litter threatens basking sharks, turtles, seabirds and mammals, whilst also posing a hazard to humans. To help monitor the distribution of marine litter around the UK coast and identify the sources, the MCS instigated Beachwatch in 1993. The scheme was extended to quarterly surveys in 1999, under the banner Adopt-a-Beach.

Community groups wanting to help protect their favourite stretch of coast can now provide invaluable year-round data for the MCS Adopt-a-Beach database. The choice of beach is yours, from 20m to several miles in length, sand to cobble to rocks, open coast to estuarine, urban to rural, provided it has not already been adopted. (Mudflats are not suitable for Adopt-a-Beach for logistical and safety reasons.) There are 125 adopted beaches in the UK, from Chapel Porth in Cornwall to Walkmill Bay in Orkney.

Public participation is vital for collecting valuable data sets that enable us to effectively lobby for change. To help MCS achieve "Seas fit for Scotland", perhaps you or someone you know could take part in one of these practical initiatives. ■

● *MCS Scotland: Calum Duncan, 3 Coates Place, Edinburgh EH3 7AA. Tel 0131 226 6360, fax 0131 226 2391, mcs.scotland@care4free.net.*

Rest of UK: MCS,9 Gloucester Road, Ross-on-Wye, Herefordshire, HR9 5BU. Tel 01989 566017, fax 01989 567815, info@mcsuk.org.www.mcsuk.org

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Salus mundi

In Search of Wilderness, a Radio Scotland series broadcast last year, celebrated landscape and literature in six wilderness areas.

The "hosts" for the on-location programmes included JMT policy & partnerships manager Will Boyd-Wallis with Becks Denny; and trustee Dick Balharry, who chose a walk out from an (undisclosed) bothy in the Letterewe area.

Triple Echo Productions of Newtonmore made the series, and you should be able to catch a full description on their website. Richard Else and Margaret Wicks produced, and the presenter was Sarah MacDonald.

The programmes, and the authors chosen, were:

Torridon with Chris Smith
William Wordsworth
Lewis Grassic Gibbon
W.H. Murray
Iain Crichton Smith
Gerard Manley Hopkins

Sutherland with Will Boyd-Wallis and Becks Denny
John Fowles
Hermann Hesse
Peter Matthiessen
Walt Whitman
W.H. Murray

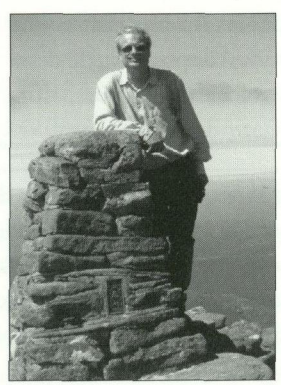
South Uist with David Craig
Catherine Macaulay
Margaret Fay Shaw
Angus MacLellan
Catherine MacPhee's lament for the evictions

Letterewe with Dick Balharry
Frank Fraser Darling
William Scrope
Aldo Leopold
Thomas Pennant
Louise Dickenson Rich

Skye with Julie Brook
John Muir – from the Unpublished Journals
Gerard Manley Hopkins
Tennyson

Cairngorms with Chris Townsend
John Muir
Arthur Ransome
Robert Louis Stevenson
Colin Fletcher

- *Triple Echo Productions: Tel 01540 673170, fax 01540 673166, www.tripleecho.co.uk*



Richard Else

Chris Smith, Culture, Media and Sport Scretary, who commented:"the Cuillin is one of the most fantastic mountain ranges that we have. The idea of a man owning them and being able to sell for profit does irk."

Land management and the John Muir vision

Jane O'Donovan & Diana Gilbert

IN MARCH last year The Highland Members Forum held their annual seminar in Inverness. The purpose of the meeting was to let members hear how land management decisions within the Trust are taken and implemented.

Initially three views of the Trust were presented: a member's view from David Broadhead, an outside view from Dr Kenny Taylor (wildlife writer & broadcaster), and a view from the Trust by the Director, Nigel Hawkins. Three workshops were then steered by Nigel Hawkins, Angus McHattie (Trustee) and Andrew Thompson (former Trustee).

David felt that the motivation behind most members was the knowledge that the Trust is bringing remote, hill ground into safe hands to secure access and maintain a "wild land" quality. In general he felt that the Trust was doing a good job. Kenny also felt that the Trust had a high standing as good land managers, but, in his view, the Trust had yet to grasp the magnitude of the John Muir vision. It was felt that we were not taking heed of the successes of other environmental bodies in habitat restoration or indeed sustainable land management. We should still be able to think radically and not follow the mistakes of past land management. Nigel made two pivotal points; land acquisition had been undertaken in an opportunistic way, and the Trust has resisted becoming a campaigning organisation, but would retain the focus on acquisition and management.

During the workshops we learnt that:

- 100% of Sandwood and Torrin, 80% of Sconser and 33% of Strathaird are under crofting tenure. The Trust, as the landowner, has little or no control over the management and thus the aspirations of members cannot readily be fulfilled.
- Knoydart is uncrofted, but the Trust does not hold the sporting rights which restrict its ability to control the deer population.
- Management of each estate is devolved to local committees with one Trust staff member, one Trustee, and a variable number of crofting tenants and/or community members.
- There is no senior staff member with land management skills overseeing any of the properties. For example, Strathaird estate is currently managed jointly by a farm manager, a conservation manager and a forester.
- The farm at Strathaird is at present run in the traditional way, which is to

make a profit if possible.

- Members and Trustees at the meeting were unaware of any overriding management policies relating to land management activities.

In the plenary session, ably chaired by Kenny Taylor, a number of these key points were discussed in more detail, particularly the lack of overriding land management guidance and consequently the relative professional isolation of staff on the ground. Nor is there a mechanism for members, despite a wealth of management expertise, to engage with land management decision making at either policy or practical levels.

So, what about the John Muir vision? That bold, radical and visionary thinking? The main opportunity to take a lead and be bold is on Strathaird. However, Strathaird, like most Highland estates, does not make a profit and receives substantial government subsidy. Most estate owners have to find top-up money; in our case the membership of the Trust supplement the farm coffers. Does this fit with members' aspirations for wild land, or even good land management? A case in point is deer fencing for woodland restoration, despite the, now well developed, policy in many organisations that fencing should be a last resort.

Nigel was quick to point out that the Trust takes the approach of community involvement and slow influence. It was accepted that this is probably the only way on croft land where we have little say anyway. But effecting change in farming or estate management is usually managed in two ways, either by incentive payments or by demonstration. The most powerful way to influence neighbours is to let them "look over the fence". At Strathaird, more than any other of our properties, we have an opportunity to influence our neighbours and, a big bonus, restore the land.

In summary, a number of key points emerged :

- There may be a gulf developing between the aspirations of members regarding wild land and the acquisitions made by the Trustees.
- Land management decisions do not appear to be based on clear coherent policies that the membership has had an opportunity to comment on.
- The Trust has yet to grasp the essential, radical nature of the John Muir vision.

Our thanks go to all those who took the time to join us on a wonderfully sunny March day. ■

- *Highland Members Forum contact: Robin Noble, Torbeg Cottage, Drumbeg, By Lairg 1V27 4NW.*

Jane O'Donovan is a former Trustee (1995-98); Diana Gilbert is a Trust member who works for Highland Birchwoods, an environmental charity which promotes the management and conservation of native woodlands.

Wild weekend in Cumbria

Alan Bowring reports on the Northwest England regional meeting at Alston, Cumbria.

THE WEATHER WAS POOR as we motored up the M6 to Alston Town Hall. We missed the first speaker of the Friday evening, Kevin Patrick from Durham County Council, but were informed that he gave an interesting overview of the landscape and history of the North Pennines AONB, with reference to some land use conflicts.

We had particularly looked forward to hearing from Will Boyd-Wallis of his recent trip with his wife Becks down the length of New Zealand. We were not disappointed: full marks to Will for managing to squeeze a 6-month journey into just an hour or so. Those members who had travelled in Aoteoroa could identify with some of their many adventures.

Saturday dawned cold and grey for our short walk over the moors above the Pennine Way village of Garrigill, with land agent and Trust member Julia Aglionby. Julia gave members an insight into the practicalities of managing the estate, including the labyrinthine paperwork to obtain grants for all manner of environmental measures.

After a Roni Senior special of a lunch, Nigel Hawkins brought us up to date with developments in the increasing number of Trust sites. Nigel's talk stimulated lively debate which was to carry on later over meals and drinks in the town.

Philip Ashmole then gave a vivid account of the birth and early growth of the Carrifran Wildwood project, which captured people's imaginations. He recited a poem, *The Ben is So Healthy* by Jim Crumley, which touched on the motivations for our involvement in the great venture of which the Carrifran project and the John Muir Trust are a part.

Members brought their own wilderness slides for Saturday evening, and we sat down to enjoy trips around Greenland, southern Chile and Argentina, and the American west. On Sunday morning, some of us accompanied John Adamson to the Moor House National Nature Reserve in upper Teesdale, and others spent time at the RSPB reserve at Geltsdale. John had already outlined the work of the Environmental Change Network. In the distinctly cooler surroundings of the Pennine moors he guided us around the plethora of experimental and observational projects in the NNR. At Geltsdale, John Miles led a fascinating walk. We talk often in JMT about the holistic approach: John certainly has that, based on great knowledge. He made the visit a truly memorable occasion. ■

John Muir Award for Lifetime Achievement

Bob Aitken writes:

Friends and supporters of the JMT gathered at the Mitchell Theatre in Glasgow on 1 November to celebrate the award of the first John Muir Lifetime Achievement Award to Tom Weir, whose writing and broadcasting has inspired generations of Scots to love and care for the wild areas of Scotland.

In an intensely warm personal account Adam Watson explained how meeting Tom at Bob Scott's bothy at Luibeg in the Cairngorms when Adam was just 17 had been one of the formative experiences of his own life in mountaineering and conservation research, and spoke of Tom's extraordinary breadth of knowledge of Scotland and his passionate concern for its landscape and wildlife.

Douglas Scott told a superbly illustrated tale of expeditions with Tom to Lofoten and the Himalayas in the 1950s, which revealed Tom's enthusiasm for wild country and his considerable skill as a mountaineer.

Bob Aitken reviewed the huge range of Tom's work in conservation since the 1960s (see "A battler" below). To a standing ovation, Adam Watson presented Tom with his Lifetime Award certificate, and a novel trophy, made and donated by Ernie Baker of Aberdeen, in the form of a Vibram bootsole on a wooden plinth; and there was a handsome bouquet for Mrs Rhona Weir, an active walker and conservationist in her own right.

To round off a very happy and successful occasion, Tom presented certificates to Award scheme participants: Glasgow *Big Issue* sellers; a group from East Lothian; and Joanne Cowie from Motherwell, who received the 3000th John Muir Award. ■

A battler for Scotland's wild places

OF THREE occasions when Tom was instrumental in major change, the first was the Glen Nevis dam project in 1960. Hydro development in the Highlands had surged ahead in the heroic spirit of post-war reconstruction. So when Tom stood out, almost alone at first, against a scheme that would have plugged a 70m dam into the throat of Scotland's most Himalayan gorge and flooded half the depth of the superb Steall waterfall, it took real moral courage. He was fiercely attacked. Hydro development was curtailed due to a combination of economic and political forces with amenity arguments. But was just in time; one of the next schemes in line was the Fionn-Fada, in the "Great Wilderness" north of Loch Maree.

Rhona and Tom Weir. (Photo: Katie Jackson)

The effort led to the National Trust for Scotland, which Tom had persuaded to join the Nevis campaign, commissioning W H Murray to carry out the survey that became *Highland Landscape*, a key document in Scottish landscape conservation.

A second instance came in 1965, from Tom's membership of Study Group 9 of the "Countryside in 1970" Conference. Tom was summoned to serve on the group, exploring countryside issues in Scotland, by his great friend Bob Grieve (later Professor Sir Robert Grieve), as the one independent member of a fairly conservative group. The wide-ranging report led on to the Countryside (Scotland) Act of 1967 and the creation of the Countryside Commission for Scotland.

But Tom also wrote for the study group a ground-breaking paper on wilderness values in Scotland, which was reflected in its report: "there is a strong case for certain areas being safeguarded as 'wilderness' areas – remote areas where the intrusion of man and man-made things would be at an absolute minimum". It was the first time wild land values began to be recognised in planning for the Scottish countryside.

From the 1970s on, Tom has been engaged in stout defence of the Loch Lomond area, in his own backyard at Gartocharn near the southern end of the loch. Here again Tom started with opposition to a dam – the proposals for a massive pump-storage hydro scheme in the corrie north of Ben Lomond. A second stimulus to action was the cutting of the dire Cailness track in the same area, in the heart of a National Scenic Area. Tom's campaigning on these issues helped to foster the highly effective Friends of Loch Lomond, and the campaign for the Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park which is finally coming to fruition.

In his teens Tom was for a while an amateur boxer: early evidence of the fighting spirit that he has applied on a much wider front for 70 years since then. All of us who enjoy the wild mountain country of Scotland are vastly in his debt. ■

• *Bob Aitken, Chair of the Scottish Countryside Activities Council, was an original member of the JMT. He is a countryside consultant with special interests in management of mountain paths, protected areas, and wild land.*

South meeting stays put

Bob Langton organised the annual Southern Area members meeting.

WE APPROACHED this meeting with trepidation, as it appeared it would be the last at Stonar School. Fortunately, by the date of the meeting in October the risk had passed, and we were delighted by an unexpected first speaker: Sue Hopkinson is now back as Head of the school and she assured us that, for the next two years at least, the doors of Stonar would be open. However, thanks to members who suggested alternatives: these have been filed and are available should anyone want to run a meeting in a different part of the South of England.

One or two members mentioned problems with the Stonar venue. If transport is a problem, do get in touch – it may very well be possible to share cars. Equally, if a few members prefer to bring their own lunch at a lower cost, I am sure that this could be organised.

The meeting itself seemed as successful as ever – a tribute to the quality of the speakers and the enthusiasm of the audience of about 90. Nigel Hawkins gave his by now traditional review of the Trust's position – as the Trust grows, the issues multiply and the challenge of dealing with them effectively in a short time increases, but Nigel's grasp of both detail and the big picture means that interest never flags.

Then Philip Ashmole and Mark Durk gave us outlines of the contrasting approaches to enhancing woodland in two very different environments. The Carrifran Wildwood project is, of course, close to JMT members' hearts and Philip inspired us with a vision of what might be possible at this most exciting of sites. Mark gave an equally encouraging prospect of what is being worked towards in the gentler landscape around Bristol.

In the afternoon, Will Boyd-Wallis used slides to take us around Sandwood, explaining what has been done, what is under way and what some of the problems are. This led into a final discussion session – never enough time! – with debates on goats and deer at Carrifran, poles on Ben Nevis, and the prospects for an English or Welsh property.

It is never the intention to make a lot of money out of this event, but we showed a healthy profit: about £70 on the raffle, £154 on the event (after late bookings and a lower than expected bill) and a very large sale of Trust goods. Thanks to everyone for the support they give to this meeting: ideas for future topics, including outside speakers, are always welcome. ■

● *Contact Bob Langton at 01275 373604 (tel and fax); email bob.langton@connectfree.co.uk*

David Brower of the Sierra Club

David Brower, who shaped the face of the modern environmental movement and helped guide the Sierra Club's rise to national prominence, died in November in Berkeley, California, at the age of 88.

Brower was the club's first executive director from 1952 to 1969. During his term, the organization's membership rose from 2000 to 77 000.

"In the last decades of his life, David's passion became restoring the earth from the damage people had wrought," club president Dr Robert Cox said. "David spread the gospel of what he called 'Global CPR' – the need for conservation, preservation and restoration to repair our world. Restoration well may become David's greatest and longest-lasting legacy."

Perhaps Brower's best-known accomplishment was his success during the 1960s in leading a Sierra Club campaign to block two hydroelectric dams proposed for the Grand Canyon. Brower took out full-page ads in the New York Times equating the proposal to flooding the Sistine Chapel. He also led Sierra Club efforts to pass the Wilderness Act, halt dam construction in Dinosaur National Monument, and create national parks and seashores.

Brower was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize three times. Through Sierra Club Books, he launched the genre of large-format conservation photo books to heighten public awareness of wildlands. ■

You read it – Could you help produce it?

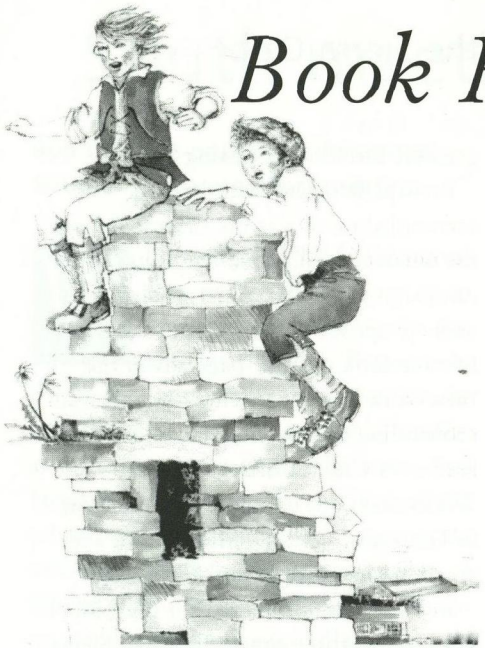
The JMT Journal & News is looking for help with page makeup and liaison with printers. We need somebody who's familiar with professional design and image processing tools, and has worked with printers. There will be creative scope too.

There are two issues a year, and about a week's worth of work for each, which can be spread out. You need your own computer and software, and email, but it doesn't matter where you live.

To find out more, please contact Katie Jackson at the Leith office by the end of February.

In fact, why not do it today?

Book Reviews



John Muir – My Life with Nature

An "autobiography" in John Muir's words, compiled by Joseph Cornell. Dawn Publications, £7.99. 80pp pback with line drawings and b/w photos. ISBN 1-58469-009-7.

Mhairi Hawksworth, aged 8, read the book (recommended for ages 10-16) for us, and this is what she thought.

Did you like this book?
I really, really enjoyed this book.
What did you like about it?
It was full of nature and told me a lot. It was an interesting book.
What did you think of the pictures?
The front cover was very well drawn.

Did you have a favourite chapter and if so which one?
Chapter six, 'Snow Flowers, Ice Rivers and a Dog' (the story of Stickeen).
Did the book make you want to know more / read more about John Muir?
Yes.
Did you understand most of the words?
The words were quite simple.
Was the book too short, too long or just right?
Just right.
Do you think the book is OK for 8-year olds, or better for older children?
It's OK for 8 year olds.
Have you got any other comments?
The end of the book is really interesting at the end because it tells you more about John Muir. ("Explore More" section, with ideas for activities inspired by what John Muir did.)

- ***Mhairi was talking to Katie Jackson. Buy the book from the JMT for £8.50 including P&P.***

1000 metre hell

Hell of a Journey: On foot through the Scottish Highlands in winter by Mike Cawthorne. Mercat Press,164pp, £12.99 pback. ISBN 1 84183 005 4

This is the story of Mike Cawthorne's solo journey through the Scottish Highlands to climb all the 1000-metre peaks between November and March. Starting from Sandwood Bay – JMT gets an honourable mention – his course snakes first through the North-West Highlands, thence across the Great Glen to Lochaber. From there, he turns to the Cairngorms and Grampians, before heading south-west into the Southern Highlands, then turning north to finish in Glen Coe. The entire journey was undertaken on foot, and he replenished himself by a series of judiciously placed food dumps. Accommodation was a tent or bothy, with but occasional use of hostels or inns. During the journey he endured gales, blizzards and floods, but also witnessed days of perfect calm and blue skies.

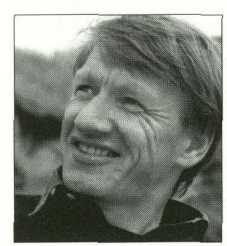
Why did he do it, you ask? Was it not foolhardy? He has considerable experience, and completed the Munros in a single sweep in 1986. Now, without going abroad, he was looking for "the wildest and toughest journey one could take, something new and untried".

At times he did long to have a companion (he occasionally had one) but those periods were nothing to "the sheer intensity of the experience and the moments of ecstasy .. which had become a daily feature". It is perhaps odd then that he often expresses self-doubt, and he not infrequently put himself at some risk from extremes of conditions . However, for him this is his way, with "..every trip needing the discipline of a target or challenge, something achievable, albeit at a stretch and some personal risk."

Mike's writing carries the reader along at a good pace, and those who climb the hills in winter will readily identify with his range of experiences and the scenes he describes, even if at times his language is a little fulsome. If I have any gripe, it is the maps. The main one is fine, but the others seem to be arbitrarily chosen, and virtually none seem to be in context. However, that is a minor point: settle into a comfortable armchair and enjoy it.

Gavin Stewart

A High and Lonely Place by Jim Crumley (2nd edition, 2000). 128 pp, Whittles Publishing, £15.99. ISBN1–870325–68–0



This is a book which every member of the Trust will want to read (probably more than once) especially in this impassioned, far-sighted second edition. Jim Crumley is not just a Cairngorms enthusiast and powerfully evocative writer about their moods and seasons, he is an inhabitant among fellow inhabitants – birds and beasts, slopes and snows, pinewoods and silence.

For Crumley, all of these are vividly alive in the Cairngorms and are listened

to by his alert and reflective ear. He wants to take the reader into an engagement with "the mountain's being". So, more than a sensitive and lyrical description of what an inhabitant can apprehend in a sub-arctic and unique landscape, this book is searching to put into words the deepest levels of learning to be had by our species there.

"Coire Garbhlach is the perfect thoroughfare for such philosophising" is a characteristic introduction to a typical walk which is without an agenda – a summit or a species – but a sensuously alive journey to "a space", reverberating with all that it has to offer the fully engaged learner. Through Crumley's direct and thoughtful language we learn so much that our own further forays can't help but be richer.

The far-sighted proposals at the end of the book will challenge Trust members' thinking about wilderness management. Crumley wants to give landscape the priority,, "give nature its head, permit nature to care for its own", and to begin by "dismantling the playground" – "the nearest carpark at Coylumbridge". He fears for the land that is *not* bought by conservation groups and retains the former JMT argument for a whole highlands national park. Taking the Cairngorms out of local authority control is the first step towards "underdevelopment", which would lead to fewer jobs in tourism and more in conservation-based careers (kick-started by the John Muir Award?). He suggests that a later-day John Muir should take Ministers into the mountains for a few days, as Muir did with President Roosevelt on behalf of a living and abused landscape.

Whether you agree with Jim Crumley's final proposals or not, this is a stimulating and inspirational book.

Terry Gifford

Social Land Ownership Vol 2. Case studies from the highlands and islands. Graham Boyd and David Reid (eds). Not-for-profit Landowners Project Group. 76pp illus. ISBN 0 947919 21 X.

This is the second set of eight case studies on social land ownership, the effort to "develop or manage land in ways which further democratic, social, environmental and economic objectives".
The locations are in the islands of Hoy and Eigg; Birse on Deeside; Laggan; Kinlochleven; and Balmacara and Corrary in Lochalsh.

The initiatives are based on forestry, property development, grazing, and other activities. They include private and community led schemes, with a great variety of partner agencies. All show that a formidable amount of planning, research, negotiation and, above all, money-raising is needed for progress.

In his long and useful introduction, David Reid says that "accessing grant aid assumes enormous importance. Making funding applications is rarely a straightforward matter, often fraught with delays and uncertainties."

He advocates more, and better-coordinated support from the funding agencies, and a social land development bank, with a sustainability ethos.

For anyone thinking about a venture, this is not perhaps comforting reading; but it's probably essential.

- *Available from Community Learning Scotland, Rosebery Ho, 9 Haymarket Tce, Edinburgh EH12 5EX. Tel 0131 313 2488, fax 0131 313 6800.*

MM

Music and song from the Gaelic tradition, vocalists Anne Martin & Ingrid Henderson. CD, Whitewave Music.

This CD is a mystical selection of Gaelic songs from Skye.

The chief vocalist, Anne Martin, has a voice of distinct individual quality that portrays the unusual styles of song with variation of colour and timbre. From the soothing quality of *Braigh Uige* to the lively bustling feel of *Horo Gun Togainn*, she portrays the working lives of the islanders with her singing partner Ingrid Henderson. The percussion of harp, fiddle and saxophone provides a colourful backing, invoking the natural surrounding landscape of Skye. Here are a harmonious, haunting blend of traditional Gaelic songs that touch the senses and capture the spirit of a bygone Hebridean era.

- *Available from the JMT, £12.99.*

Sarah Guthrie

Ralph's Far North by Ralph MacGregor. 224pp. ISBN 0 9538703 0 8.

Ralph is a columnist with the Caithness Courier, a hillgoer, cyclist, runner and public transport user. He's also that godsend, an outdoor writer with no baggage, and all of these 76 pieces are short, vivid and to the point.

They cover Caithness and Sutherland, of course. There are stravaigings further south, like Nevis to Dalwhinnie and Easter in the Cairngorms, and even a training run in the lovely Malvern Hills.

Two pieces stand out. In a hard winter spell, he skates 4 miles round Loch More, and scrambles up an icebound Morven, where "crampons might have helped". "An August day in the far north" is a panorama of the workers, tourists, birds, animals, plants, insects and weather that have their hour in the end-of-summer light. Intimate, pacy, well-informed writing – as you'd expect from a good local paper!

- *From bookshops, and for £12.95 +£1.50 post from Curlew Cottage Books, Hilliclay Mains, Weydales, Thurso KW14 8YN. 01487-895638.*

MM

Letters

How the Nevis gorge survived

It was a special pleasure to see the Nevis gorge and the Steall falls on the cover of the summer Journal. Few people may realise that this magnificent view could have been very different.

In 1960, as a junior civil engineer, I worked on a hydro-electric proposal to dam the gorge and submerge most of the falls. I escorted an artist for the North of Scotland Hydro-Electric Board to the same viewpoint, to paint an impression of how the dam would enhance the landscape. My most vivid recollection is of clambering up the waterfall carrying a huge white board, so that the water level could be depicted correctly.

At that time there was little opposition to such projects, but the prospect of a concrete wall filling the gorge so appalled me that I resigned and lobbied the relevant Government committee. Gradually opposition grew to the Nevis scheme, and eventually approval for it and for other hydro-electric developments was revoked.

It is wonderful that ownership by the JMT gives further assurance that the grandeur of the Nevis gorge is no longer at risk.

Douglas L Stewart, Peterculter, Aberdeen

Shoulder the burden!

Most JMT members will associate the John Muir Award with young people. However, the committee, now sadly defunct, which devised the Award scheme saw it as a reflection of many aspects of Muir's life; his boyhood and youth, Muir the mountaineer, the explorer, the botanist, the geologist, the writer, the campaigner, etc. It was within this context that Tom Weir was recently, and deservedly,presented with the John Muir Award for Lifetime Achievement.

Adam Watson and Bob Aitken referred to Tom's campaigning efforts against the proposed Glen Nevis hydro scheme, the Ben Lomond Hydro scheme, the Fionn-Fada hydro scheme and against the road to Loch Coruisk. By coincidence the involved lands in Glen Nevis and by Loch Coruisk are now owned by JMT (not a campaigning body).

As the Shieldaig hydro scheme north of Torridon again threatens wild areas, and calls are being made for the visitor restrictions on the funicular railway on Cairngorm to be relaxed, even before it is completed, it is possbly time for JMT to reconsider its policy on active campaigning to safeguard the wild and raise people's awareness.

We may not have another Tom Weir to lead future campaigns in cases such as these, so we should shoulder the burden. Buying some areas of land is not enough while such abuses are being planned and executed.

Terry Isles, Newbigging, by Dundee

JMT and Ben Nevis

Nick Kempe's thoughtful article *What price mountains?* (Journal 29) addresses an issue that, in my opinion, has needed to be debated seriously within the Trust for quite some time.

I am concerned whether this purchase is compatible with the declared purpose of the Trust which, as I understand, is to provide sympathetic and sustainable management of land for the human, animal and plant communities which share it. I take this to mean, as far as humans are concerned, those who live on the land and earn their livelihood from it.

When I became a member of the JMT in 1987 I never imagined that one day I would be supporting an expenditure of £450 000 to purchase a mountain "waste" incapable of sustaining any activity other than outdoor recreation.

Nor am I enthused by the need to raise a further £550 000 to manage this purchase, in the almost certain knowledge that effective management will be compromised so long as the remainder of the mountain lies outside a conservation estate.

As a long-standing member, I would like an explanation as to how this expenditure on land destined almost solely for outdoor recreation squares with John Muir's philosophy, and indeed with that of the JMT itself, which has undertaken to make his philosophy a reality.

Eric Bennett, Rothesay, Isle of Bute

Valuation of the Ben

I agreed with almost all of Nick Kempe's article *What price mountains?* except the part asking how much should be paid for Ben Nevis. He says (and I would agree) that the two factors that might cause an increase in its value over the usual are social cachet and prevention of development.

He asks how a mountain with 70,000 visitors per annum can have social cachet. Alas the answer seems to me only too obvious; it has social cachet because it has 70,000 visitors a year. A man cannot boast about owning a Scottish mountain of which his hearers have never heard. If he boasts about owning Ben Nevis it will mean something.

As to prevention of development, Nick says that development will never happen if we pressure government to implement strong planning laws. But what about that period before that pressure is successful? Opposite the first page of Nick's article is the statement by the JMT trustees on "the inadequacy of current statutory powers to protect the public in areas of wild land".

I myself am sure that wild land should be owned by trusts, with obligations enforceable by the courts, rather than by the state, with power to change the rules. Even if the present government were to acquire the land, how could we be sure that the next government would not get rid of it?

Richard Lloyd-Hart, London

Where are pure and ruthless ideals?

I have been meaning to write for the last couple of years and the comments of Eric Bennett, Derek Robbins and Joyce Tombs have finally stirred me into action. I too have become most dismayed at the direction the Trust has taken recently.

I originally joined out of admiration for an organisation which was prepared to convert into action its pure and ruthless ideals to safeguard wild land "for its own sake and the wildlife that depends on it".

The gradual dilution of these ideals with an apparent overriding concern for local communities, the creation and upkeep of footpaths, and commitment of Trust funds on inappropriate purchases has, sadly, made me increasingly suspicious of the motives of some of the trustees and forced me to question my continued support.

Paul Flackett, Rainow, Cheshire

Lobbying force

I endorse Nick Kempe's premise that the voluntary sector, on the generosity of its members, cannot continue to purchase wildland indefinitely, in default of proper involvement by the Scottish Executive.

The issue seems to have come to a head with the JMT acquisition of Ben Nevis, which needs conservation management methods applying to its surrounding area to function effectively as a wildland reserve. The purchase has also given the JMT greater national prominence. Briefing from the JMT and kindred bodies should aid the translation of government's commitment on land reform to a positive strategy for it.

On the point that people who responded to the Ben Nevis appeal represent a political lobbying force, I wondered whether the JMT might consider mailing a preprinted postcard to its membership, for forwarding to MPs/MSPs with the remit of government securing the rest of the Ben through its agencies, to form a viable conservation area?

Adrian Zealand, Fowlis Easter, Invergowrie, by Dundee

London: Wild land talk by Terry

Terry Isles, former Director of the Trust, and until recently a Trustee, will talk on "Mountaineers, Landowners and Guardians: The Story of Wild Land Protection in Scotland" on Tuesday 27 February. He will describe practicalities and experience, and subjects will include the Unna rules, the NTS, the effect on local people, the effect of the new Scottish Parliament, and of course the JMT.

The meeting is from 7–8.30, at International Students House, 229 Great Portland St, W1 (opposite tube, free parking nearby from 6.30, cafeteria available before the meeting).

Advance booking is preferred but not essential – contact David and Barbara Hawgood, 26 Cloister Road, London W3 0DE, 020 8993 2897, david@hawgood.com. No charge – David and Barbara are sponsoring the meeting. Everyone is welcome. ■

Muir Trail companions?

Geoffrey Williams writes: **Wanted – mountain lovers to accompany fit 70 year old on the John Muir trail in 2001 or 2002 subject to permits, costing, and compatibility. Contact Geoffrey Williams on 01558 822 960 or Gdvaughanw@aol.com -to arrange meeting.**

FOR CONTRIBUTORS

The Journal & News welcomes words, photos, illustrations and ideas.

Please contact the editor by the end of April about contributions to the Summer 2001 Journal.

- **WORDS can be sent as paper, floppy (Mac or Windows) or email. Please save and send WP files as Plain Text.**
- **PICTURES are best sent as artwork, transparency, black & white or colour prints. We reserve the right to edit contributions, and accept contributions at the sender's risk.**

Members' Services

Adverts for members' own businesses and ventures are free on the following pages. The size is one sixth of a page, and the suggested word count is 50-60.

Discounts to fellow members and donations to the Trust are welcome, but are not necessary for inclusion.

If you want a bigger ad, or one placed elsewhere, please contact the editor, or the Information & Promotions Manager.

Summer 2001 advertisers

We will repeat all ads in this issue unless you say otherwise. For new ads and changes, please contact the editor by 1 May.

Phone 01488 608672.

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- *Please mention the Journal when replying to ads!*

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Brewer's Cottage is in the conservation village of Tomich, near Glen Affric and Corriemoney RSPB reserve. Lots of Munros, woodland and moorland walks. Sleeps 4 in comfort; all facilities. Set in 4 acres of natural woodland. Good pub 5 mins walk. £200/week or £30/night. Discount for JMT members.
Dave & Ailsa Peck. 01456 415280.
peck@cali.co.uk

Grantown-on-Spey
KINROSS HOUSE

STB 4 stars, open all year.
JMT members 30% off regular B&B prices for 3+ nights or 15% off for 1-2 nights.
£17-22pppn
Free sauna, gym and cycles. Great meals, licensed.

Woodside Avenue, Grantown-on-Spey, Moray PH26 3JR
Tel 01479 872042, fax 873504
http://www.kinrosshouse.freeserve.co.uk

Spend a wild winter month on the Isle of Iona

Cottage with central heating and views to die for
Sleeps 4 (n/s)
£650 pcm plus electricity and fuel.

Contact Sheena Devitt, Lagandorain,Iona, Argyll PA76 6SW
01681 700 642

BEN GRIANAN COTTAGE
Pubil, Glen Lyon, Perthshire

Luxury self-catering cottage situated at the head of Glen Lyon. Sleeps 4/5 – 3 bedrooms. Log burning stove with central heating. Pets welcome. Non-smokers only. Ideal for walking, fishing and relaxing.

Contact Mrs M Fenna, after 6, at Ballechroisk Court, Killin, Perthshire FK21 8TD. 01567 820206

Shieldaig
THE OLD SCHOOLHOUSE

Accom for 4, 2 cabin bunkbeds with linen.
Shower, WC, kitchenette, nonsmoking.
Warm, well appointed, self-contained.
GR 745584, coast road to Applecross.
£12.50/pp/night, discounts available.

Arinacrinachd, by Shieldaig, Strathcarron, W Ross, IV54 8XU
Tel/fax 01520 755231
school.house@wester-ross-net.co.uk

FROM SKI BEGINNER TO SKI MOUNTAINEER IN SIX DAYS

Tim Pettifer, a JMT member and fully qualified to teach skiing and ski mountaineering, is running a series of weekend courses for experienced winter hillwalkers or climbers. It is intended that within 3 weekends or 2 long weekends participants should be able to climb and descend moderately steep slopes on and and off piste. The courses are running from the Aviemore Ski School at Cairngorm and Tim will donate 10% of JMT members' course fees to the Trust.

www.magneticnorth.uk.com,
timmagneticn@aol.com
tel/fax Tim Pettifer 01475 674513
Magnetic North, 35 Irvine Road, Largs KA30 8HS

REMOTE LOCHAVICH

Snug stone courtyard cottage sleeps 4/5 in isolated glen 18 miles S Oban. No TV, microwave, but all comforts and laundry room.
Miles of drove roads, hills and forest tracks on doorstep. Short breaks. Colour brochure.

Mrs G H Dalton, Maolachy, Lochavich, by Taynuilt, Argyll PA35 1HJ.
Tel 01866 844212, fax 844295

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Private holiday home with amazing panorama available in this magical mountain village high above the sea. Try walking, birdwatching, kayaking, snorkelling etc, or just eating, drinking and sunbathing!

For a truly non-resort based holiday in the real Greece, tel 0121 445 5336
5% of members' bookings will go to JMT.

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Far northwest of Scotland
Self-catering family bungalow at Oldshoremore on the edge of the Sandwood estate. Three bedrooms – sleeps five.
Central heating, open all year.

Dilys & Michael Otter, Smithy House, Oldshoremore, Kinlochbervie IV27 4RS.
01971 521 729

SNOWDONIA

Self-catering bunkhouses/camping/activities from £5 pp/night. Secluded upland valley 15 min Betws-y-Coed. Discover and explore the wild places of Snowdonia .
Guided walks and assistance with your John Muir Award project available.

Del Davies, Bryn Beddau, Nant y Rhiw, Llanrwst LL26 OTW.
01492 640906
bryn.beddau@virgin.net

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E.Murphy@bigfoot.com

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www.walkscotland.com
Email: amentamedia@hotmail.com

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(on the coast road to Applecross)
Tel/fax 01520 755231
school.house@wester-ross-net.co.uk

WEB SITE DESIGN

Anderson Design is a professional, high quality web site design company specialising in web site solutions for small to medium businesses and organisations. Check our web site for examples of our work and details of costs.
20% discount to JMT members.

Glenedin House, Greenleeshill, Cambuslang, Glasgow G72 8YL
Tel 0141 641 9653, fax 0141 641 4192
st@andersondesign.co.uk
www.andersondesign.co.uk

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REPTILE WORLD. The Award-winning reptile exhibition, breeding centre, refuge and shop. Frequent snake handling sessions
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The Old Mill, Harrapool, Broadford
Isle of Skye IV49 9AQ
01471 822209 / 822533
web page: www.travel.to/serpentarium
email: nik@snakebite.com

Bed & Breakfast Listings

B & B in members' and non-members' properties on or near Trust lands. The listings on this and the next page were originally just for Skye; they're spreading.

John Kubale
Strathaird House
Strathaird
Isle of Skye IV49 9AX
01471 866269
strathairdhouse@skye.co.uk
www.strathairdhouse.skye.co.uk
£25-£30, also self-catering £175-£250

Mrs J Donaldson
Fairwinds, Elgol Road
Broadford, Isle of Skye IV49 9AB
01471 822270
2 Double, 1 twin, £20-£21, bike hire available

Mrs C Shearer
The Shieling, 2 Lower Harrapool
Broadford, Isle of Skye IV49 9AQ
01471 822533
£12 – £18

P & V Tordoff
Millbrae House
Broadford, Isle of Skye IV49 9AE
01471 822310
£16 – £21 private & ensuite facilities

R Vander Vliet
Blue Lobster, Glen Eynort
Near Carbost, Isle of Skye IV47 8SQ
01478 640320
£18
Also self-catering accommodation

Mrs M J Gilmour
Myrtlebank, Achachork
Portree, Isle of Skye IV51 9HT
01478 612597
£16 / £18 (standard / ensuite)

Mrs Chrissie MacLeod
The Old Schoolhouse
Sconser, Isle of Skye IV48 8TD
01478 650313
Hector_Mcld@aol.com
From £15/night

Mrs Jan Scott
1/2 of 2 Lower Ollach Braes
Portree, Isle of Skye IV51 9LJ
01478 650301
£17
One double, shower & own sitting room.

Mrs E Barraclough
Braeside, Kinlochbervie
By Lairg
Sutherland IV27 4RP
01971 521325
£18-£20
1 family, 1 double, 1 single & 1 twin, with tea-making.

Mrs Sheila Morrison
Croftfoot, Arnisdale
Kyle of Lochalsh IV40 8JL
01599 522352
£18, DBB £33
(bookings from 1 March)

S Hepworth, Manager
The Kinlochbervie Hotel
Kinlochbervie
Sutherland IV27 4RP
01971 521275, Fax 01971 521438
klbhotel@aol.com
Hotel: £35 B&B
Bunk Rooms: £15 B&B, £11 room only

Self-catering Listings

Self-catering properties owned by members and non-members, on or near Trust lands.

Paul Barter
Cottage at Carbost, Isle of Skye
01626 852266 (Devon)
Sleeps 6, £160-£385/wk

Mrs C L MacKinnon
6 Camus Cross, Isle Ornsay
Isle of Skye IV43 8QS
01471 844249 (day) 01471 833285 (eve)
1 cottage, 3 bedrooms, slps. 5,
£150 – £300/wk

Mrs Anne McHattie
10 Waterloo, Breakish, Isle of Skye IV42 8QE 01471 822506
1 cottage, slps. 5-6 £150 – £290/wk

Mrs Elizabeth Bushnell
Clover Hill Holiday Cottage
Rowanlea , 1/2 of 6 Torrin
Broadford, Isle of Skye IV49 9BA
01471 822763
1 cottage, slps. 6, STB 4 star. Magnificent view to Bla Bheinn. £175 – £420

Mrs J Copping
1/4 of 10 Torrin
Broadford, Isle of Skye
01471 822669
jemimacopping@lineone.net,
www.isleofskye.net/10torrin
Caravan at Torrin, slps. 4
£80 – £110/wk + daily rates

Mr & Mrs Kubale
Strathaird House, By Elgol
Isle of Skye IV49 9AX
01471 866269
Cottage, slps. 4-6, £175 – £250/wk

Fiona Mandeville
Fossil Bothy Independent Hostel
13 Lower Breakish Isle of Skye IV42 8QA
01471 822644 (day) 01471 822297 (evening & w/end)
£8.00 per night

Mrs Macdonald
West Croft, Kirkhill, Inverness IV5 7PB
01463 831333
1 cottage, Isle of Raasay, slps 4-6,
£200 – £300

Mrs Cook
13 North Park Terrace, Edinburgh EH4 1DP
0131 332 4759
Beautifully situated croft house near Polin beach, by Kinlochbervie.
Sleeps 7/8 £100-£220/wk

Mr J P Mackenzie
152 Oldshoremore, Kinlochbervie
Sutherland IV27 4RS
01971 521281
Cottage sleeps 3
& caravan sleeps 6,
£70-£150/wk

Mr R Gordon
C/o Lude, Blair Atholl
Perthshire PH18 5TS
Bunkhouse at Barrisdale – send SAE for further details

Mrs A MacDonald
165 Drumnaguie, Rhiconich
Sutherland IV27 4RT
01971 521780
£150-£200/wk

Anne Mackay
3 Innes Place, Kinlochbervie
Sutherland IV27 4RW
01971 521335
36ft, 6 berth static caravan,
£180 out of season, £220 in season

David Falkner
6 Kilbride, Torrin, Broadford
Isle of Skye IV49 9AT
01471 822685
1 cottage, sleeps 2 £225/week
1 chalet, 2 bedrooms, sleeps 4 £200/week

Contacts

Contacting staff at the JMT

We can often answer your questions quicker, and more cheaply, on the phone or by email. Please check the list for the best person to contact.

■ **Bill Wallace**
Secretary & Treasurer
Gavin Stewart
Finance Manager
Trust finances and accounts; legacies

■ **Alison McGachy**
Development Manager
Fund-raising and membership recruitment

■ **Katie Jackson**
Information & Promotions Manager
Trust meetings and events; Members' News; slide packs & display material

■ **Donna Mackenzie**
Administration Manager
Merchandising; volunteering; general enquiries

Leith Office, 41 Commercial Street,
Leith, Edinburgh EH6 6JD
(tel) 0131 554 0114 or 554 1324
Fax 0131 555 2112
Bill and Gavin: treasurer@jmt.org
Alison: development@jmt.org
Katie: promotions@jmt.org
Donna: admin@jmt.org

■ **Jane Anderson**
Membership Secretary
Membership Applications & Renewals; changes of Address;
direct Debit enquiries. Deed of Covenant enquiries; donations & Gift Aid Scheme. (please quote your membership number)
Freepost, Musselburgh EH21 7BR
(a stamp on the envelope reduces our costs)
(tel) 0131 665 0596
Membership@jmt.org

■ **Nigel Hawkins**
Director
Questions or comments about the Trust's aims, objectives and policies or any other aspect of our work.
1 Auchterhouse Park, Auchterhouse,
Dundee DD3 0QU
(tel/fax) 01382 320252
NigelHawkins@jmt.org

■ **Dave Picken**
John Muir Award Manager
■ **Angus Miller**
John Muir Award Programmes Coordinator

Information on leader training, fund raising trips, summer residential programme.
Leith Office, 41 Commercial Street, Leith, Edinburgh EH6 6JD
(tel) 0131 624 7220
Dave: manager@johnmuiraward.org
Angus: info@johnmuiraward.org

■ **Mandy Calder**
John Muir Award East Lothian
Enquiries relating to the Award in East Lothian
Council Buildings, Haddington, East Lothian EH41 3HA
(tel) 01620 827628
Fax 01620 827291

■ **Andrew Campbell**
Land & Property Manager
Fearnoch, 1/2 16 Torrin, Isle of Ske IV49 9BA
(tel) 01471 822717
woodlands@jmt.org

■ **Will Boyd-Wallis**
Policy & Partnerships Manager
Raven Cottage, 144 Oldshoremore, Rhiconich, Lairg IV27 4RS
(tel) 01971 521459
sandwood@jmt.org

■ **Keith Miller**
Conservation Manager, Sconser, Strathaird & Torrin Estates; Knoydart
Bla Bheinn, Strathaird, Broadford, Isle of Skye IV49 9AX
(tel) 01471 866260
(fax) 01471 866238
Skye@jmt.org

■ **Ian MacKinnon**
Estate Manager, Strathaird Estate
Creag Ard, Elgol, Isle of Skye IV49 9BL
(tel) 01471 866236
(fax) 01471 866238
IanMacKinnon@jmt.org

■ **Mike Merchant**
Journal Editor
Articles, letters etc. intended for publication in the Journal & News.
34 Stockcross, by Newbury, Berkshire RG20 8JX
(tel) 01488 608672; 0793 9537909 (m)
Journal@jmt.org

■ **Bill Smith**
Conservation Activities Co-Ordinator
First point of contact for conservation activities. (If you have indicated an interest and cannot attend please let Bill know as soon as possible).
81 Overton Avenue, Inverness IV3 8RR
ConservationActivities@jmt.org

Bill is down under
Bill Smith is away till 5 February, visiting Australia and New Zealand with Janet. Please make Donna at the Leith office your first point of contact for work party enquiries until then.

Postal auction for Jane's masterpiece

Jane Anderson, membership secretary, recalls:

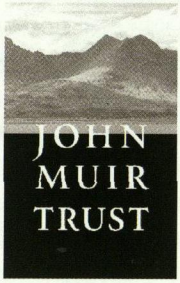
It seems like a long time ago I suggested to Nigel that I would make a sponsored quilt to raise funds for the Trust. First it appeared as a line drawing in the summer Journal & News, 1997. Next came the sponsors. Then came the long shopping trips to fabric shops. Then there was the sorting out of colours, tracing and cutting the pieces, then sewing - lots and lots of sewing - all by hand. Finally all 30 blocks were finished, quilted and sewn together - all 80 x 96 inches of it. Now, three years later, it's finished!

There has been a lot happening in those years. The quilt was actually finished just after the last AGM, but the timing was wrong what with Schiehallion and Ben Nevis. I was busy with donations and new members and everyone else has been busy as well.

The quilt has already made £250 thanks to our 28 sponsors. Now it's time to put it up for auction. We've decided on a postal auction. There is a reserve price of £500 and bids (with name, address, phone number, and amount) can be either posted to the usual Freepost address - John Muir Trust, Freepost, Musselburgh, EH21 7BR with envelopes marked "Quilt" please - or emailed to membership@jmt.org.

You can also view the quilt and get more details on our website www.jmt.org.

Closing date for bids will be 19 April 2001. In the event of a tie, names will be put into a hat. The winning bid will be announced at the AGM weekend, 21/22 April.



The John Muir Trust

John Muir, born in the small Scottish port of Dunbar, emigrated with his family as a child to the USA. There in his adopted homeland he became a founding father of the world conservation movement, and devoted his life to safeguarding the world's landscapes for future generations. Since 1983, the John Muir Trust, guided by Muir's charge to "do something for wildness and make the mountains glad", has dedicated itself to making Muir's message a reality within the United Kingdom. By acquiring and sensitively managing key wild areas, the Trust sets out to show that the damage inflicted on the world over the centuries can be repaired: that the land can be conserved on a sustainable basis for the human, animal and plant communities which share it; and the great spiritual qualities of wilderness, of tranquillity and solitude, can be preserved as a legacy for those to come.

Trustees

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